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NGC
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MARIO GOLF
UK'S FIRST REVIEW!
INDEPEND T NINTENDO GA
39 PAGES OF REVIEWS!
F-ZERO
The ONLY verdict you should trust – get inside now!
VS BATTLE
16
LINK
ASTAROTH
007
BE FIRST TO SEE THE GC>GBA LINK IN ACTION!
SOUL CALIBUR II
THE BEST FIGHTING GAME EVER HITS THE UK! SEE LINK KICKIN' ASS – RIGHT HERE!
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HOT NEWS!
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Wario Ware
& Zelda 2!
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Out 26th September

"Get saving NOW. This is the best fighter on GameCube. In fact we'd go so far as to say that it's the best Nintendo beat'em'up we've ever seen."

NOM 9/10

"The GameCube version comes out on top with Link as an exclusive character."

Cube 9.2/10

"If there's one thing we're most excited by, it's the thought of playing the game on Nintendo's GameCube controller, which is perfectly suited for SOULCALIBUR control."

IGN CUBE











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CHANGE IS GOOD

Yeah, just there mate… yeah, pile 'em up just there. Yes… *there*. Sorry, you'll have to forgive me <*meep-meep-meep…*> I've just moved into the **NGC** office and I don't know where <*meep-meep-meep…*> everything is yet. You looking for the Reviews Department? Just down the hall, fourth door on the left past the Royal Overton Suite I think but <*MEEP-MEEP-MEEP*> mind your back there…<*forklift truck dumps six crates of cherished videogame memorabilia all over the goddammed floor*> Okay, where do you keep the buckets? Martin…? *Buckets?*

28 HOURS LATER…

Ah… better. This is the life. Real games, real game fans and a reeeeal nice view of a Mexican restaurant. **NGC**'s got it all.

Which is why I'm thrilled to be the new alpha male round here. I've been playing, writing and enthusing about Nintendo games for as long as I can remember. I know why **NGC**'s your favourite Nintendo magazine, and I won't monkey around with its award-winning style.

Instead, I'll just concentrate on bringing you the biggest games month-in, month-out; the sharpest Gamecube and GBA reviews around; exclusive, brutally honest first looks – hey, maybe even some delicious 'hot' Gamecube news. **NGC**'s still the *only* choice for real Nintendo gamers, despite the imitators and rip-offs. We'll make sure it stays that way.

Hawkins
marcus.hawkins@futurenet.co.uk

TURN TO PAGE 10
For the **NGC** verdict on this month's biggest game…

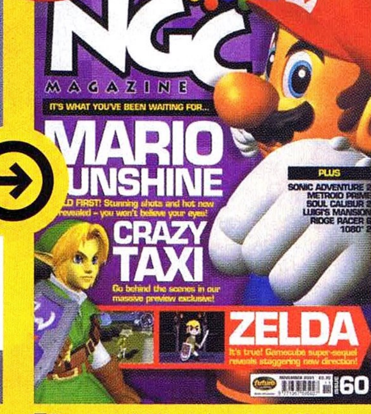
SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
Go to page 110, where for a small amount of cash you can get three free issues and a free joypad. No excuses!

TURN OVER THE PAGE!
For the full contents listing of this Link-battering issue of ***NGC*!**

WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

NGC's the result of over a decade of gaming genius – so you're the best-informed Nintendo gamer around.

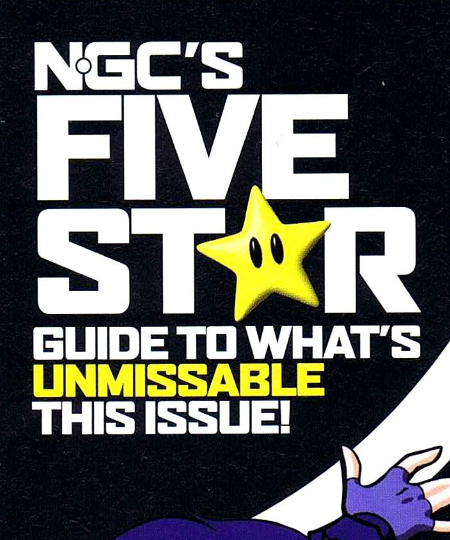




■ In the beginning… there was Super Play. Dedicated to the SNES, it changed videogame magazines forever.

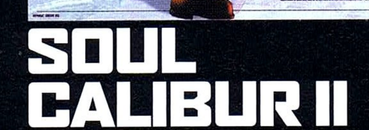
■ As the N64 became the choice of real game fans, Super Play made way for the mighty N64 Magazine.

■ From issue 60, N64 transformed into NGC – the ultimate hit for true Nintendo fans!



NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!

1 PAGE 10



SOUL CALIBUR II

EXCLUSIVE! The English-language version's out – see it here first!

2 PAGE 18

JAMES BOND

EXCLUSIVE! We infiltrate EA HQ – here's the news on *Everything or Nothing*.





SOUL CALIBUR II

PAGE 10

> "INCLUDES EVERYTHING THAT THE JAPANESE RELEASE FEATURED, PLUS KEY EXTRAS"



MEET ENJiKi

Enjiki is **NGC***'s mascot, which means you can usually find her lying around the office getting in the way, occasionally stirring from her beanbag to make the tea. But we've got used to having her around, and at any rate her pal Pinkjiki's a no-nonsense sort of lady and threatened to tie Geraint into a knot if we evicted the dizzy girl. And we're the only people allowed to duff up the Welshman…*



3 PAGE 44

ANY PORT IN A STORM

How do titles on 'Cube compare to the other systems? Here's the truth.

F-ZERO GX

So blisteringly fast, you'll want a new skin by the time you've finished playing. No disappointment here.



4 PAGE 66

5 PAGE 72

MARIO GOLF

FIRST REVIEW! Golf. It's not cool. Mario. He's cool – for a plumber. And together, they're utterly addictive.

WHAT'S IN NGC?

After something in particular in this packed issue? Here's where you'll find it.

PREVIEWS

First looks and exclusive development news.

NEWS

What's happening in the wonderful world of videogames.

EXTENDED PLAY

Get more out of your Nintendo system of choice.

REVIEWS

The latest games available in the shops and on import.

play with fire













"One of the best RPGs available on any console."
NOM 89%

"You could never accuse this game of thinking too small."
NGC 9/10

"Slick, practised and enjoyable."
EDGE



OUT SEPT 19



OUT OCT 3



OUT OCT 24

3 games to make you think.

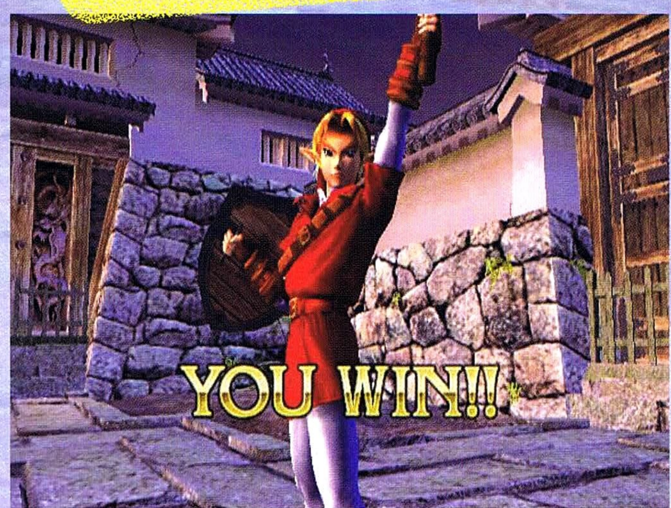

GAME OF THE MONTH!
The UK version of *Soul Calibur II* will be available in the shops from Friday 26th September. With the Weapon Master mode translated into English, many more of the original game's subtleties become apparent…

NGC STAR GAME

SOUL CALIBUR II

NGC SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

The English-language version's even better than the Japanese one. Amazing.



△ You just can't resist plumping for the imp. Despite there being a wide assortment of warriors, armed to the teats with fearsome weapons, Link… rules.



hen a game's this good, one helping's just not enough. Namco's awesome *Soul Calibur II* took **NGC** by storm, netting an impressive 92% rating in issue 81. As it's out in the UK in a matter of weeks (on Friday 26th September), it's time to take apart the English-language version. We've already gone to town on Gamecube's essential fighter, so we won't bore you by repeating all the basics again. But, you're probably asking, what's new to the version we'll be getting? Will there be any new fighters, any extra-special hidden goodies? Well, we've been playing the translated 'n' updated version non-stop, for a whole week. We know the game inside out – and outside in again. Geraint's had to receive medical attention for his thumbs, but it's been worth every second of the Welshboy's pain. Let us clear things up for you…

"THE BIG SURPRISE COMES WHEN YOU BOOT UP THE GAME AND DISCOVER THREE EXTRA CHARACTER SLOTS…"

The biggest, and most welcome, surprise comes when you boot up the



TURN OVER
… for the **NGC** analysis of the English-language version. It's the best fighting game on God's Earth. We'll show you why…

MISSING LINK

Zelda's saviour packs some incredible projectile moves (eat boomerang! Chew arrow!) and has a useful multiple stab move when up close.



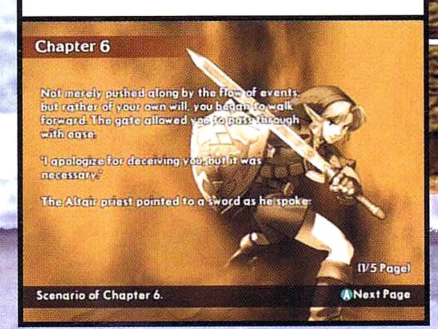
NEW FACES

All-new, all-improved Soul Calibur II features three new playable characters. Lizardman's probably the one you'll settle for most – he's right handy.



MISSION YOU ALREADY

Weapon Master mode takes you all over the world map, and means some stunning fight locations. Wait until you see Raphael's French chateau…


Chapter 6

Not merely pushed along by the flow of events, but rather of your own will, you began to walk forward. The gate allowed you to pass through with ease.

"I apologize for deceiving you, but it was necessary."

The Altair priest pointed to a sword as he spoke.

(1/5 Page)

Scenario of Chapter 6.

Next Page

GOLD TIME'S SAKE

You can spend the gold you earn on useful items like weapons, upgrades and, er… new outfits. Earn experience to lift your character rank.



△ The mysterious Assassin – now fully playable. His style's similar to Chinese sword-wielding Yunsung (second row, third from left).

game, head to the Character Select screen and discover three extra character slots. That's right, on the Japanese version of the game there are only 20 selectable characters; here there are 23. New faces Assassin, Berserker and Lizardman are available for play in Versus and Practice modes – after you've unlocked the angry fools, of course.

Releasing all of the hidden characters sounds like a simple task. Nail the challenges in Weapon Master mode – ranging from battering enemies against a tight time limit or battling through stages with your health constantly dropping – and by the time you've finished, every hidden character's crammed in your inventory. Fighting your way through the whole of Weapon Master mode once and liberating the first five hidden characters is something you will probably be able to do the first night you have the game. Getting through it a second time is, thankfully, quite a bit more challenging – the computer AI is automatically reset from 'dumb-ass' to 'bad-ass' and, dammit, it *knows* how to fight.

> **"ALL THE MOVES, COUNTERS AND REVERSALS FROM THE JAPANESE VERSION ARE COMPLETELY INTACT"**

In this case your main advantage is going to be knowledge, something that import players wouldn't have had, unless they were fluent in both reading and writing Japanese. While most of the Weapon Master quests are pure fights, rather than complex tests designed to teach you a new skill, many have special win conditions that you have to meet, such as defeating your opponent with an air juggle or besting three fighters in a row without falling down. These conditions are laid out for you as part of the story before the match begins. Meet the win condition and the match is yours.

Although the English-language voiceover is professionally put



△ Rod hell! Both Seung Mina and Kilik pack sticks that are ideal for taking out an opponent's legs.



△ Purple Link takes a sole (hey!) to the face. The facial grimaces – when you spot them – are INCREDIBLE.



△ You'll just find the prancing mincer Voldo intensely irritating after a while. Geraint likes him a little too much.

IF HYRULED THE WORLD

The first choice for every Nintendo gamer, Link actually proves to be a light, devastating fighter in the right hands, rather than the cute-but-ineffective lady-boy he could have been. You know, you might just grow to love him…



■ A still from the beautifully rendered intro to the game. Link can select from a variety of swords, as well as another familiar item from the *Zelda* games – his hammer. Oh, and a… butterfly net. Bless.



■ Bomb! Er… you need to lob it towards your opponent round about now, or it'll go off in your tiny elf-gloved hands…



■ Boomerang! Hitting 'em once not good enough? Use the boomerang and catch them on the way back as well!



■ Arrows! To be honest, probably the weakest of Link's arsenal – when he's not in close enough, they're easily dodged.

together, there are no doubt some people who won't settle for anything less than the original Japanese soundtrack, regardless of getting to know win conditions. Well, they should be quite pleased, because the game lets you switch between English and the original Japanese character voices.

DEPTH CHARGED

As far as gameplay's concerned, Namco haven't changed a thing. All the moves, counters and reversals from the Japanese version are completely intact and ready to be rolled out in the heat of battle.

One thing of note is the fact that the C-stick has a function similar to the one it has in *Capcom vs SNK EO* where, if you flick it in a certain direction, it triggers a special move. Completely optional, this feature is sure to be of assistance to new players who know what they want to do but haven't yet wrapped their heads around the full *Soul Calibur II* guard-parry-attack control system. There's still tremendous depth and subtlety to the fighting mechanics, though, ensuring it's a game that appeals to beginners and advanced players alike, offering both parties the chance to sharpen their skills at their own pace.

BLAME IT ON TRIO

For the three new characters Namco could have taken the easy way out – like more unscrupulous developer-types would have been inclined to do – and just assigned each of them similar moves and skill sets. Thankfully, they've decided to invest time and energy, creating

ARMOURY

CONGRATULATIONS!

SOULCALIBUR

Acquired 'Soul Calibur (Evil)', a weapon for Xianghua.

Working through the Weapon Master mode gives you the opportunity to unlock a host of features, from new weapons to solo weapon exhibitions for each character. You can also set up CPU-controlled fights in the 'Battle Theatre' that allow you to watch them from any angle. The only way to gain these extras is to win money and unlock new areas in the mode's main map – some of which are devilishly hard to find.



△ Even the pre-fight loading screens are packed with information. Bronze Apprentice? Pah!

THE CHOICE OF CHAMPIONS

*With such a wide range of fighters, there's one for everyone. Absolutely everyone, even your gran and your gran's dog. Although some of the **NGC** team's preferred characters may come as a shock to you…*



■ Stubble-cheeked Hawkins plumps for Mitsurugi every time. He says it's a 'Ryu thing'. *Riiight.*



■ Despite his recent run in with a real-world poodle, Paul, as Nightmare, is unbeatable.



■ With his noble hair and 23-year-old stare, Kilik has become the natural choice for Geraint.



■ Martin *is* Cassandra. The thin hair? The Nemea shield? It's tough telling them apart.



■ **NGC**'s word-polisher Miriam adores Talim's Elbow Blades. They're all the rage in Trowbridge.



■ Two alternate costumes – but there can only be one winner. Marcus. Remember that.



■ No-one argues with Paul when he's in Nightmare mode. Not even Marcus. See?



■ Visually, this simple rod-twirling move's one of the best. Leave her alone now, eh, Evans?



■ Oh dear. Despite his nimble thumbs, freak-boy Voldo downs him with tambourines.



■ What a shot! Maxi's six-pack goes for a burton as Mim screws out a chunky uppercut.



△ Seung Mina is one of the unlockable characters, and a very handy lass when it come to cheesing through the tough bits.



△ Some of the environments have real depth to them – slip close to the edge and the camera pans up to capture it all.



△ Each character has a selection of alternate costumes. Astaroth's purple get-up's a particular favourite…



△ The animation's stunning. Watch the poor love's head bow as Link goes nuts with his hammer. Nice impact there as well…

three complete and very different characters.

As the name might suggest, the Assassin is the most nimble of the three, with the ability to strike quickly. In many ways this new character feels like scissor-fingered fruit-loop Voldo crossed with one of the regular female characters. An image you really shouldn't dwell on for too long…

Lizardman is perhaps the most balanced character of the new trio, with a focus on mid-range attacks and an incredibly useful head-butt move. Looking like one of Jurassic Park's velociraptors ballooned up on pig steroids, Lizardman can be a powerful character in the hands of an experienced player. No wonder they kept him 'unplayable' in the Japanese version.

The last of the three, Berserker, is going to be intimately familiar to anyone who plays through the Weapon Master mode if only for the fact that – and we're not spoiling anything here – there's a dungeon filled with Berserker clones you have to slice through. What the brute lacks in speed, he definitely makes up for in power, putting him alongside the chunky likes of Astaroth and Nightmare.

"THE ASSASSIN FEELS LIKE SCISSOR-FINGERED FRUIT-LOOP VOLDO CROSSED WITH ONE OF THE REGULAR GIRLS"

LINK-SLINGER

Of course, we can't forget the inclusion of this month's cover star, the bat-eared hero of *Zelda* himself. Forget, if only briefly, the cel-shaded delights of *The Wind Waker* – this is how Link *should* look. All 20-year-old agility, anger and aggression squeezed into the tights of one of Santa's helpers.

Selectable from the start, Hyrule's No.1 son, despite his slight frame, proves to be more suited to a beat-'em-up than you might appreciate. Yes, it's pure pantomime to see Link getting stuck into the likes of Cervantes with… a butterfly net. But equip

EN GARDE

Before you attack, it's wise to get a decent grasp of your defensive possibilities…



■ **The eight-way run is *Calibur's* best feature, allowing you to circle your opponent freely and gracefully sidestep attacks before closing in.**



■ **The standard guard. You can block high and low and, as you get better, you'll instinctively block multi-hitting combos before…**



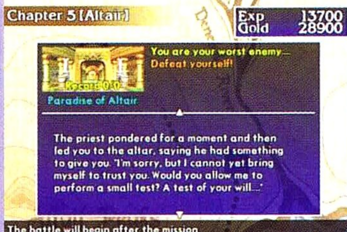
■ **…using the 'Guard Impact'. This technique allows you to parry strikes away or across your body, opening up your opponents *reeaal* nice.**

△ **Certain arenas are, how shall we put this, a little tight for fightin'. Surprisingly, it's not too easy to claim a Ring Out.**

△ **The more gold you earn, the bigger the prizes.**




△ **NGC's made it to Subchapter 3 – *Subchapter 3!* – by hitting girls and fat men.**



△ **Everything makes sense in English…**



△ **The character modelling's impeccable – you'll be stunned.**

him with one of his swords and his leaping, pirouetting, stab-stab-uppercut style never fails to please.

Rinkydink fans will be cheered to see his familiar weapons making an appearance. As well as a selection of swords, a hammer and the ever-present shield, mid-flow he can toss a bomb at an opponent or pull out his bow and let loose an arrow at them. Non Link-fans will just find them a minor irritation – and want to pound his stupid bony face in even more. With a brick.

SOUL IN ONE

We're pleased. Very pleased. As a whole, this tweaked version of *Soul Calibur II* is an impressive package, given that it includes everything that the Japanese release featured, as well as some key extras. It might not revolutionise the series, but there are enough enhancements to warrant a place in your collection.

Out now in the US, and due at the end of the month over here, we highly recommend you get involved. It's one of the best looking games you'll ever have seen, it's fast, punchy, boasts simple, accessible controls – the Gamecube pad's never seemed quite so complementary to a beat-'em-up – and offers rich depths for those who go looking.

Put simply, it's the best fighting game on *any* system – and any challenger's going to have to go some to knock it out of the ring. Go on, treat yourself – you've been working hard, hey, you *deserve* it…

THE BEST

92

Way back in 'Nam (okay, issue 81…) we delivered the verdict on the Japanese import of *Soul Calibur II*. And we're sticking by that score for the redefined English-language version. It's an incredible game, deserving a place in everyone's collection – unless you're truly, violently averse to beat-'em-ups. The atmosphere, rich detailing and slick combat never fail to enthral. And the Gamecube version handles better than any other. Need any more excuses?




FIFA





Spotlight Off The Ball™ Vision. Now your reading of the game makes all the difference. Achieve complete control over every player on the pitch. Not only the one with the ball. Play passes into space and anticipate the movement of team-mates. Pick out the player who has made the most prescient run and deliver the perfect pass to split the opposition.



Spotlight Off The Ball™ Running. Great players know that what you do without the ball matters just as much as what you do with it. Make dummy runs, find the space and pull defenders out of position. So that, when the ball does come your way, you're in the right place to inflict maximum pain.



Spotlight Off The Ball™ Receiving. Invade the space and then defend it. Off The Ball™ Control means that you have to fight over every inch of turf for the good of the team. And risk losing your shirt in the process. Because you need to be strong to get into the best position to receive the ball. And brilliant to bury it.

The most important ball skill is what you do without it.



Spotlight Innovative Gameplay. The enhancements to FIFA Football 2004 don't end with Off The Ball control. In-game Team Management lets you change tactics and call plays in real-time. Plus you can create set pieces and introduce them into the action at the touch of a button thanks to Set Piece Play-Calling. It's a whole new ball game.



Spotlight Career Mode. Assume the manager's role and take your team from zeroes to heroes. The inclusion of lower league teams and stadia brings greater depth to the gameplay, with the added spice of promotion and relegation battles. If you can balance the books and take your team from nowhere to the big time in successive seasons, immortality awaits.



Spotlight Football Fusion. Get even more from FIFA this year with Football Fusion. Import a team from Total Club Manager 2004 and play their games for real in FIFA, then export the result and continue managing. You can create an all-star team in Total Club Manager 2004 and play their fixtures in your new FIFA game. Or export a team from Total Club Manager 2004 not featured in FIFA Football 2004 and play their matches in real-time.





It's in the game.™

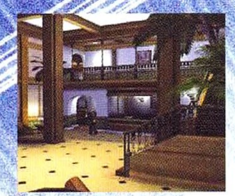
www.fifafootball2004.ea.com

NOBODY DOES IT BEDDA

When it comes to defeating bad guys and saving the world, one man's been leading the charge for 50 years. And if this adventure turns out as well as it should, he'll be fit to lead it for the next 50 years too. We'd bet our Moneypenny on it.



Δ Most convincing explosions on GC?



Δ As ever, James Bond's passport is well-used.



Δ You can play stealthily if you really prefer…

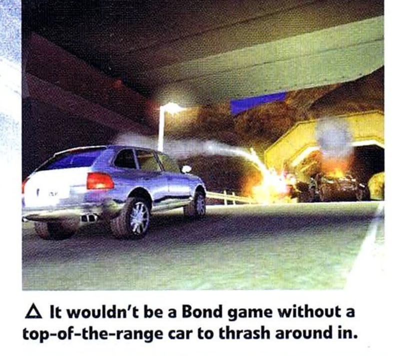


Δ A dry martini, broken, not stirred.

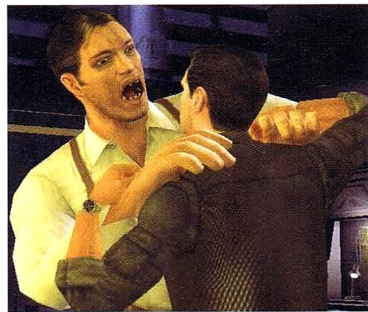


THE KNOWLEDGE

- Stars Pierce Brosnan as Bond.
- Third-person point of view enables you to gaze on Brosnan's manly visage.
- Uses GBA as a Q gadget that provides tips and hints.
- In-depth co-op mode. Play with a friend.
- Huge multiplayer battle mode. Play with bits of your friends.



Δ It wouldn't be a Bond game without a top-of-the-range car to thrash around in.



Δ As if travelling by train wasn't misery enough, old foe Jaws turns up too.



Δ It's not just the cars that are British – as well as his Aston Martin, Bond's managed to get this fab Triumph Daytona. The Daytona 600 launched this year. Well, Bond always has the latest gadgets…

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Electronic Arts

What have they done before?
James Bond 007: Nightfire (NGC/78, 80%)
The best Bond game on GC so far – and done with some visual flair – but a little lacking overall.

JAMES BOND 007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

He hasn't been on top form since GoldenEye. Now EA are preparing a killer Bond for launch.



Infiltrating Electronic Arts' North American headquarters isn't quite as difficult as breaking into MI6 HQ, but it can be intimidating – the EA campus is huge and each building has its own rather military-looking security checkpoint. After finding the right building and bribing the guard to give us an EA ID badge, we headed to the development centre for an exclusive look at the newest NGC and GBA versions of *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing.*

The developers' Bondmania is evident as soon as you walk through the door. A life-size standee of Pierce Brosnan and Halle Berry adorns the entrance and a Bond 'flame woman' from one of the opening CG sequences is attached to the wall of the main hallway. Bond movie paraphernalia is everywhere.

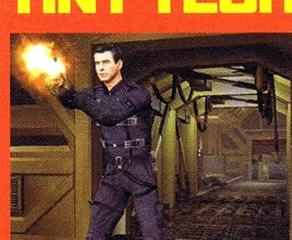
In the demo room, our contacts (producers Joel Wade, Erin Turner and Scott Blackwood) were waiting to show us *Everything or Nothing.* They each specialize in a different aspect of the game, and so could show us each element in detail.

Designed to play out like a movie, *Everything or Nothing* has a plot and a cast that you could easily mistake for the next Bond film's. In it, the world's latest super-villain, Nikolai Diavolo, has plotted to bring about world domination through abuse of nanotech. It is up to Bond to foil Diavolo's plans once and for all.

PHAROAH 'NUFF

As the man most directly responsible for the action levels in the game, Joel took the lead during the demo and showed us the first level, which takes place in an Egyptian nanotech facility. After infiltrating the factory (naturally *sans* dinner suit), Bond makes his way down the face of a building courtesy of a handy rappel line. Once on the ground he is

TINY TECH



Nanotech, which the devious Nikolai Diavolo is using to further his own evil ends, is actually a really cool concept. Basically, researchers are trying to create *really* tiny machines, about the size of a sugar molecule. The idea is that one day they'll be able create little robots to do everything from store vast amounts of data to repair tumours and fight diseases from inside you – they'll be small enough to be injected straight into your bloodstream. Diavolo's aims are more malevolent, hence you trying to stop the freak…

DID YOU KNOW? The only member of the **NGC** team to wear a dinner suit is Marcus. Geraint's got a suit, but it's of the romper variety.


△ It's worth doing this just to see the effects.


△ Another stealthy move from Commander Bond.


△ A stone-cold killer… and a hungry shark. Will Bond treat his fishy friend to dinner later on? You bet your boots he will.

contacted by M and given the mission objectives.

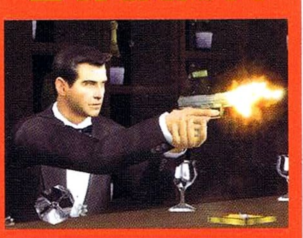
Sounds exactly the sort of thing you'd expect, right? But there's one big difference. In a major departure from the previous Bond games, *Everything or Nothing* is played primarily from a third-person viewpoint. The emphasis on all-out combat has been removed, and you'll now have the freedom to choose your methods – stealthy and silent or go around blowing everything up. Both options are equally valid and the game engine handles either with ease.

Borrowing an idea from IO Interactive's *Hitman* series, Bond has the ability to disguise himself as a defeated enemy. This stealth tactic allows him to sneak into heavily-guarded places undetected. As far as we've seen, you can't trundle about under a box like Solid Snake, though.

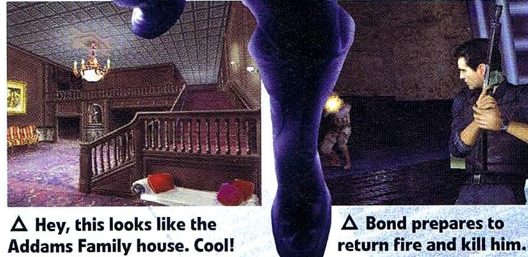
After completing the factory level there was an FMV, and then Bond found himself on a train, surrounded by enemies. Joel used this level to illustrate the usefulness of stealth tactics in the game. By moving quickly and quietly, he was able to complete the level in mere minutes and make the whole thing look incredibly easy. Of course, we had to give it a try to prove our worth. Taking a more gung-ho approach, our Bond was spotted almost immediately

"BOND HAS THE ABILITY TO DISGUISE HIMSELF AS A DEFEATED ENEMY"

STARRY!



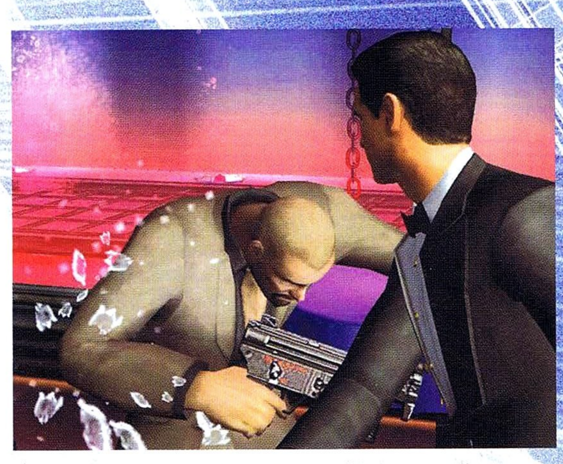
EA wanted to make the game feel like the films, so they went right to the source – the actors. *Everything or Nothing* features Pierce Brosnan as James Bond, Judi Dench as M, John Cleese as Q, Shannon Elizabeth as Serena St. Germaine and Willem Dafoe as villain Nikolai Diavolo. It's not just voices, either – the actors were cyberscanned, so when you see Bond, you're looking at a 3D model of Pierce Brosnan. While it isn't quite virtual acting, it's pretty darn close.


△ Hey, this looks like the Addams Family house. Cool!

△ Bond prepares to return fire and kill him.



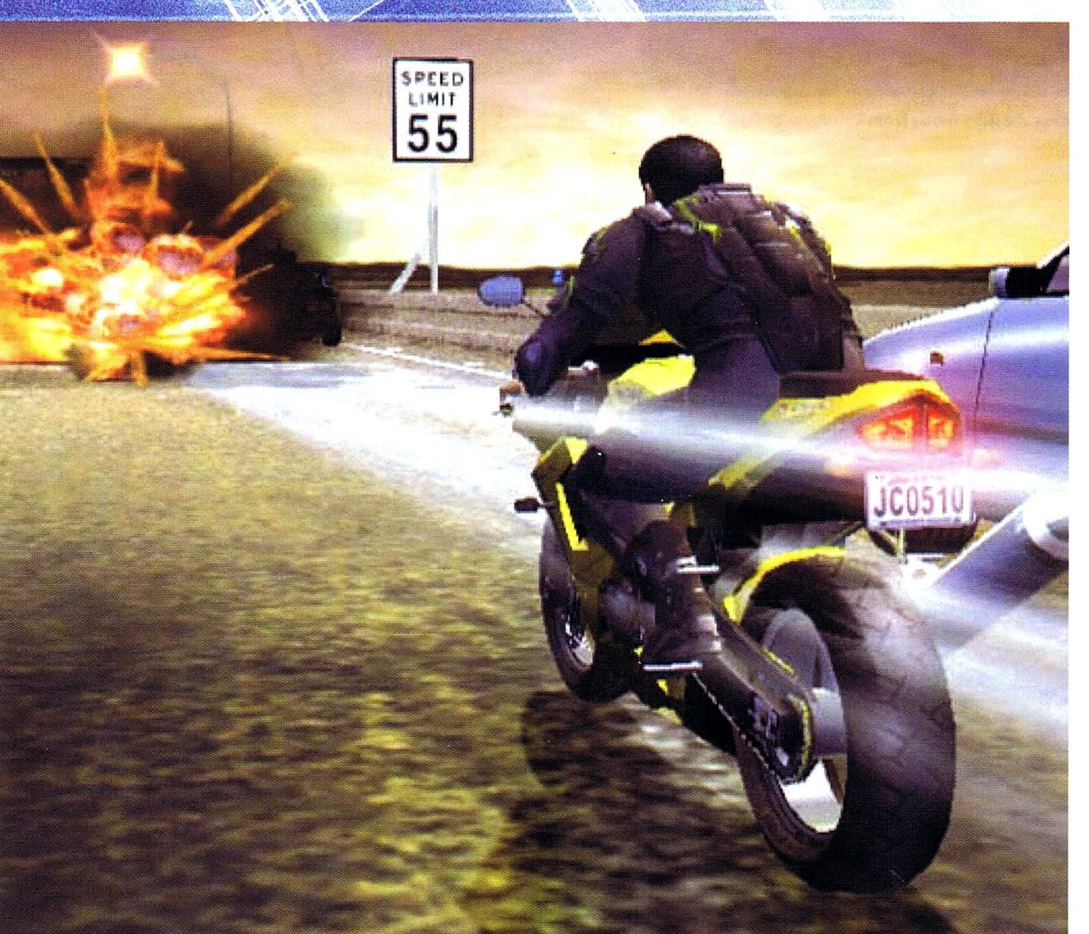
△ 'Report unsafe drivers?' The phone lines will probably be jammed solid for hours after you've blown the lorry up.


△ Ammunition's scarce in this game – a big departure from *Nightfire* – so you'll have to use close combat tactics instead.

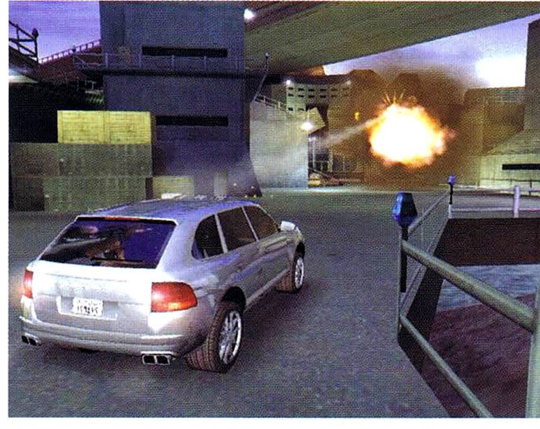
Q-GBA!

Exclusive to the GC game is the ability to link with the GBA one. When it's connected, there'll be a Game Boy Advance SP icon at the top of the screen. When it lights up, look at the GBA screen to see a screen shot and a clue. The clues help you find bonus weapons and avoid enemies.

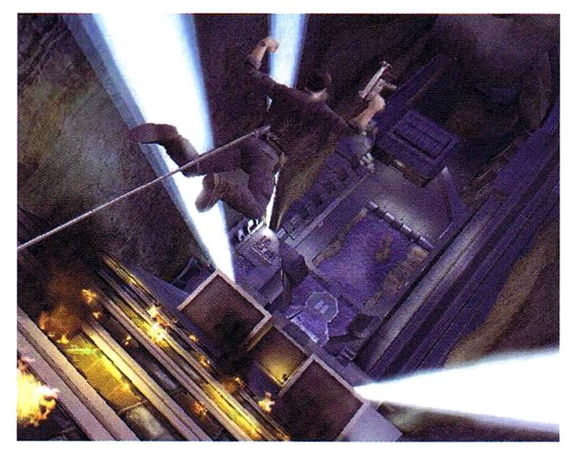




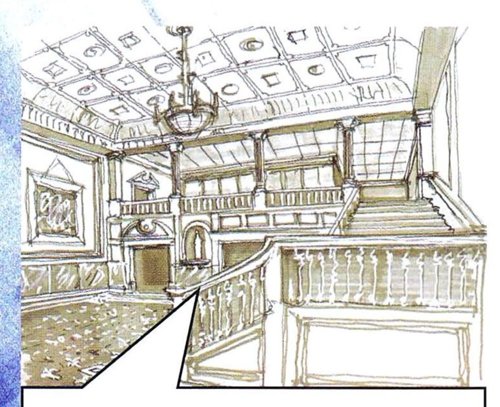
Δ Like your Aston Martin, your Triumph has some weapons and gadgets installed. Basil Fawlty'll go nuts if you trash it.



Δ It might look like a family saloon – but it's not. Clever.



Δ Time to make a very speedy exit – the building's alight.



DEVELOPING A WORLD

The earliest sketches are usually drawn in black and white with little detail. They are used to lay out the game visually and test the pacing of the plot. In some ways a storyboard has lots in common with a comic as it helps the developers visualize their game in action, as opposed to reading about it in a design document.

by the guards who not only fought intelligently, but also called in reinforcements to give us a sound shoeing. Combat handled well – thanks in no small part to an intuitive target lock button – though it was decidedly more difficult than taking the stealth approach. Ammo is not plentiful in *Everything or Nothing*, so when you do fight the use of hand-to-hand combat is encouraged. And when we got into the last carriage of the train, we *had* to use it – against a chrome-dentured blast from the past!

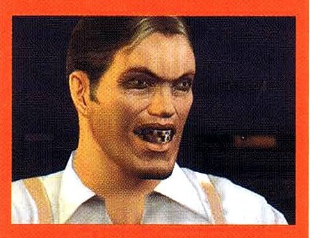
STEER CRAZY

When we'd finally thrashed Jaws, it was time to step into a vehicle. Over the course of the game you'll get to fly a helicopter, race a spanky Triumph Daytona motorbike *and* fight your way through downtown Moscow in an impressively chunky tank. Nearly all of the vehicle missions involve combat, and they still keep that movie feel that EA have worked so hard to create.

When Bond first hops on his Daytona, he races through a forest, shooting enemy encampments on the side of the road. Moments later, he's on the main road dodging traffic and a hail of gunfire. A well-placed ramp provides the opportunity for a stunt as well as the ability to jump past a pack of cars blocking your way.

The ultimate goal of the Daytona level is to eliminate a lorry carrying a nanotech payload. Once Bond reaches it he has to lay down the bike, skid smoothly underneath the lorry and fire a flamethrower up into the body, blasting the cargo of mini-machines to kibbles. It may sound complicated, but the context-sensitive controls mean that you should be able to pull it off. Oh, and of course it looks incredibly cool when you do manage it. You *will* want your mates to see you do it.

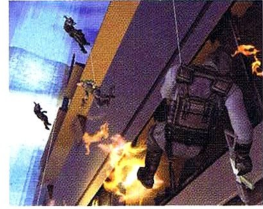
SMILE!



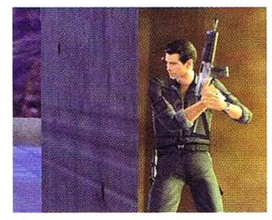
At one point, you'll enter a train – and guess who's waiting for you in the last train carriage… As a boss fight, the battle with Jaws is relatively easy, but scrapping with him really shows off the interactive environments. Jaws resorts to tearing sections from the carriage wall to use as makeshift weapons when you get stuck in. This then reveals exposed power conduits. Force Jaws into a conduit and the electrical surge will take him down for the count.



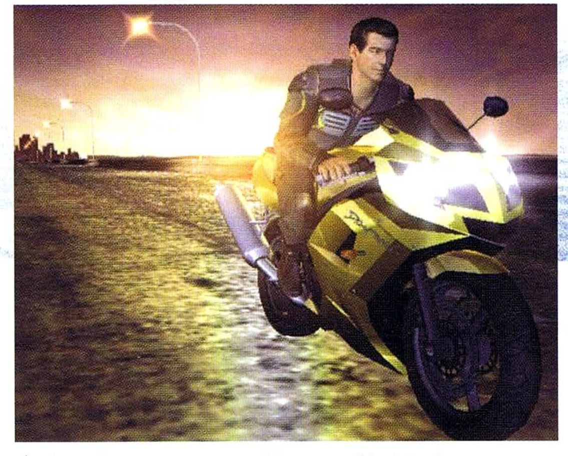
△ You get to fly the helicopter in some sections of the game. And, naturally, you use it to blow stuff up.



△ You shoot these blokes. Well, what else would you do?



△ Third-person stealth is always popular. As is Bond.



△ Pierce Brosnan was scanned to create this virtual spy.



△ You'll still have to take care of enemies while rappelling.



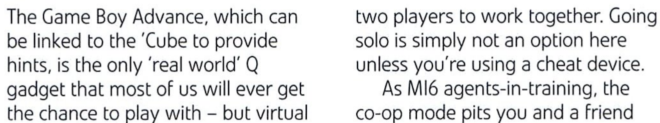
△ The flames are incredibly well done. Get out of there!



△ A jump will get you quickly past backed-up traffic.

The Game Boy Advance, which can be linked to the 'Cube to provide hints, is the only 'real world' Q gadget that most of us will ever get the chance to play with – but virtual Bond will have a full complement at his disposal.

EA are promising that more than 20 different weapons and gadgets will be available for use in the finished game. We can't go into detail yet – hell, we've only used a couple so far – but, needless to say, they're looking good.



"A GBA CAN BE LINKED TO THE 'CUBE TO PROVIDE HINTS – A 'REAL WORLD' Q GADGET…"

TWIN, LOSE OR DRAW

In addition to the main game, *Everything or Nothing* also features an intricate co-op mode that needs two players to work together. Going solo is simply not an option here unless you're using a cheat device.

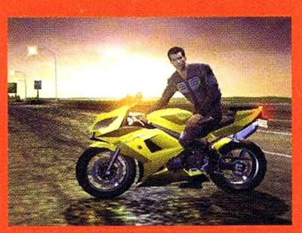
As MI6 agents-in-training, the co-op mode pits you and a friend against a well-armed terrorist threat. Featuring levels loaded with bottlenecks, the only way to advance is through the judicious use of cover fire. More often than not, one player will have to run through said bottleneck while the other eliminates any enemy threats. Then, once safely on the other side, the first player returns the favour.

At first the co-op mode feels odd, as it's an unusual way to play in a game, but if you happen to have a relative or flatmate who knows how to handle a controller, this mode could be the most fun aspect of the game. Of course, every once in a while you don't want to play fairly – you'd rather spend time killing your friends. We *understand*. And so do EA – they've included a competitive arena mode in the new game.

Although details are still being fleshed out, the arena games will allow up to four players and feature a number of deathmatch variations. Players will be able to assume the personae of characters found in the game as well as classic characters from the Bond series. Playing through the single-player game will unlock a number of special characters for this mode.

Despite its early state, *Everything or Nothing* is already starting to look seriously promising. The developers have obviously spent a lot of time playing other stealth games because nothing has been lost in the jump to third ▶

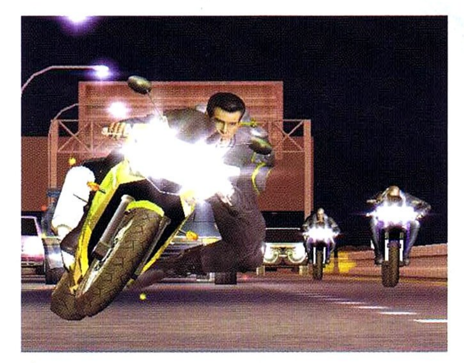
LOCATION



Because Bond's a jet-setting agent, and because the movies never limit themselves to one location, *Everything or Nothing* features a number of different places for you to explore. As you'd expect, they're rather glam and stuffed with bad guys and crumpet. From the Valley of Kings in Egypt to the nightlife of New Orleans' French Quarter, the jungles of Peru and the final confrontation in Moscow, each section of the world is richly and authentically detailed.

DID YOU KNOW? Scott Blackwood, who's leading the team responsible for the driving sections in *Everything or Nothing*, previously worked on the *Need For Speed* titles.

"Has the potential to be the best Bond game ever"



△ Get used to leaning – you'll need to get your poor old Triumph on its side at one point.



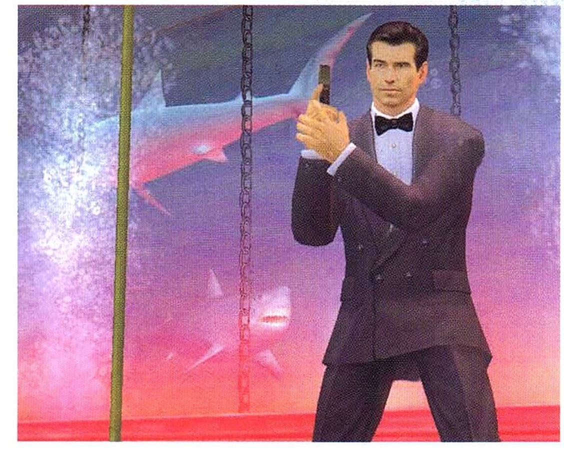
△ Diavolo has plenty of minions to throw at you – and you're all on your own. Time to even the odds.



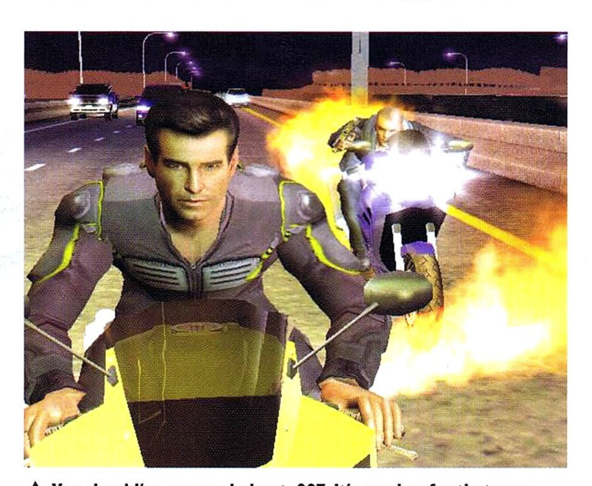
△ We've heard of burning up the road on a motorbike, but this really is taking things too far!



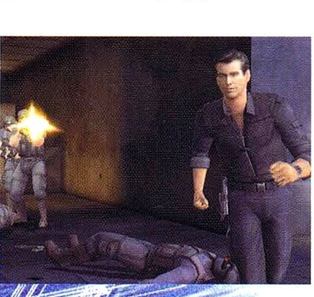
△ Given all the leaping you force the Daytona to do, it's a good job your bike's had the Q treatment.



△ He must be near the villain's hideout – bad guys *love* sharks.



△ You should've worn a helmet, 007. It's much safer that way.



△ Mess up on the stealth and the guards will all swarm in at you.



person – if anything this already handles better than last year's *Nightfire*. What's more, you switch seamlessly from creeping and running and killing on foot to driving vehicles. Level loading is hidden behind the game's FMV sequences, which allows it to maintain the illusion of zero loading time – the lack of disruption is always a plus.

Good-looking, complex levels make for a fun game but, as one of the characters in Die Another Day astutely points out, Bond isn't really having fun unless he's blowing stuff up – and there are plenty of chances to do that in *Everything or Nothing*. EA have been hard at work on the lighting and particle engines in order to create realistic-looking explosions as well as effects such as fire and steam. The effect is particularly impressive when Bond rappels down an exploding wall. You can almost feel the heat.

Although recent Bond offerings have been less than thrilling, EA appear to have learned from their mistakes as *Everything or Nothing* has the potential to be the best Bond game ever, topping even the venerable *GoldenEye*. Yes. Even we can't believe we've said that. They still have their work cut out if they wants to ensure success, but based on what we played *Everything or Nothing* seems to have it all.

"WHEN BOND RAPPELS DOWN AN EXPLODING WALL, YOU CAN ALMOST FEEL THE HEAT"



DID YOU KNOW? Maud Adams is the only actress to play a Bond girl twice – she starred as Scaramanga's girlfriend in The Man With the Golden Gun and also as Octopussy herself.

THERE'S MORE BOND ON P24!

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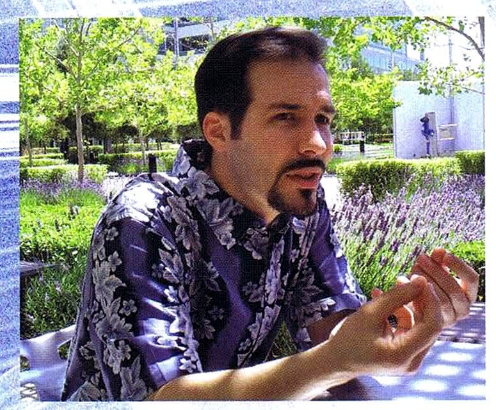
HIGH SCORE

LASTS LONGER THAN EXPECTED



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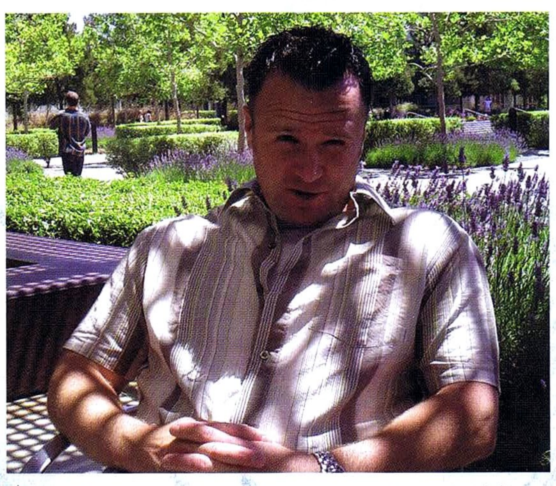

△ Erin Turner is Producer for the GBA version.


△ Joel Wade is Producer for *EON's* action levels.


△ The rappel mechanic is so good, it's been used in the Game Boy Advance game as well as the Gamecube one.

Our man in the field interrogated three Producers at EA. The information he gained is highly sensitive…

SPY TALK


△ Scott Blackwood is Producer for the Gamecube title's driving sections. We grilled him about 007's latest vehicles.


After getting exclusive insight into *Everything or Nothing*, we couldn't leave without pumping our hosts for information. We began with the game's 'action level' Producer…

NGC: Is this your first Bond game?
Joel Wade: This is actually my third. I worked on *The World is Not Enough* and *Nightfire*.
NGC: What's it like creating a game set in the Bond universe?
JW: First, it's a lot of fun. I remember going to Bond movies in the theatre. Every man wants to be Bond and every woman wants Bond. It's an alluring fantasy. It is an incredibly rich universe with 20 films spanning 40 years. That's a wealth of characters and environments.

<We switch the glare of our desk lamp towards the man in charge of the driving sections…>

NGC: So… Scott, is it? Scott… *Blackwood.* how did you come to work on the game? Aren't there actually two development teams?
SB: Right. We have a development team working on the third-person and multiplayer down here at the Redwood Shores, California, studio and we have a team in Canada working on the driving levels. This marriage first came about on *Agent Under Fire*. Both teams were working on separate projects and somebody got the great idea to put the two together. We had a driving team that knew driving, which worked on *Need for Speed*, and we had the action team.
NGC: Surely it's a bit awkward having a team in California and a team in Canada?
SB: It is rewarding, but it's a challenge when you have very large teams 800 miles apart, building a game in parallel. You need to communicate so much to stay in sync. If any little thing changes on either side, the other team needs to know about it.

<Easing back into our swivel chair, we switch our attention to… a beatiful lady…>

NGC: Erin, you're on a different team altogether. In addition to the link-up, how does the GBA version fit in with the 'Cube version?
ET: Players follow the same story and encounter the same characters, but pursue a new set of missions designed specifically for GBA.

We began development of *Everything or Nothing* GBA after the Gamecube version was in progress and are now developing it simultaneously. This has allowed us to incorporate the best of the 'Cube version – but we've created a game for GBA, not a port. As well as the original missions, there's a points system that rewards you for executing missions with Bond style. The player can go to Q-Lab and swap Style Points for power-ups.

<Leaning back, clasping our hands behind our head…>

NGC: Bond style, eh? That's got to be tough to achieve. Is it limiting to work within the license?
JW: No. Danjaq and MGM work closely with us and they're the masters of Bond. They give us an authenticity that we wouldn't be able to achieve on our own. If they say, 'That's not quite how Bond



△ Just so you don't get lost…



△ **NGC's favourite Bond is the one we're playing when you ask us – this one's a definite contender…**

would do it,' we're more than happy to make adjustments.

NGC: So what *is* the hardest part of bringing the Bond universe to life?

JW: the hardest part is living up to Bond's world – it's like ours, but sexier, better and more exciting. Everyone is beautiful, every car is incredibly fast. The villain doesn't live in a house, he lives in a castle. We don't have a car chase, we have a tank chase. Taking it up to the next level is the hardest part, but it's also the most fun.

<… casually twisting a pen into one of our ears…>

NGC: How did you choose the Bond car with no movie to guide you? And what about that Triumph?

SB: Choosing the car was easy because the Vanquish is still the consummate Bond car. We approached MGM and Danjaq and asked, 'Can we add a motorbike? How about a Q SUV?' They thought it was a great idea. We approached Triumph motorcycles and struck an exclusive deal with them for the Daytona 600. And through our license with Porsche we have the Cayenne – a 400 horsepower SUV that Bond can take into the rough terrain levels in South America.

NGC: Yes, that Q SUV's been intriguing us… How different is it making a *Need for Speed* game to a game like Bond, Scott?

SB: It's very different. When you're building missions for an action game you need to think about more than getting around the track. We have to think about enemies. This year we have the ability to get Bond in and out of the vehicles, which gives us more ways to make these missions fun and exciting.

NGC: Indeed… indeed. And how much of the game is vehicle-based?

SB: It would be about 40%. It's more than double what we did on *Nightfire*, but in terms of time played it's a lot less.

<Time to get them on the ropes – time for The Killer Question. Oh yes, you wait. Here it comes…>

"JAMES BOND'S WORLD IS LIKE OURS BUT SEXIER, BETTER AND MORE EXCITING"

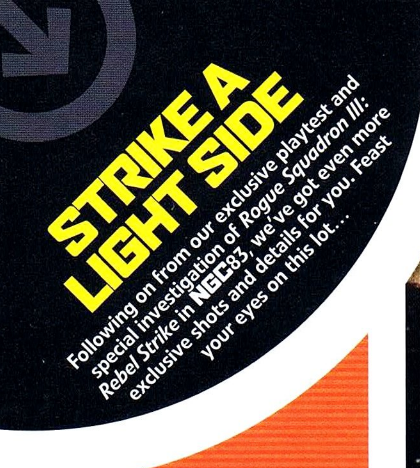
NGC: Er… who's everyone's favourite Bond?

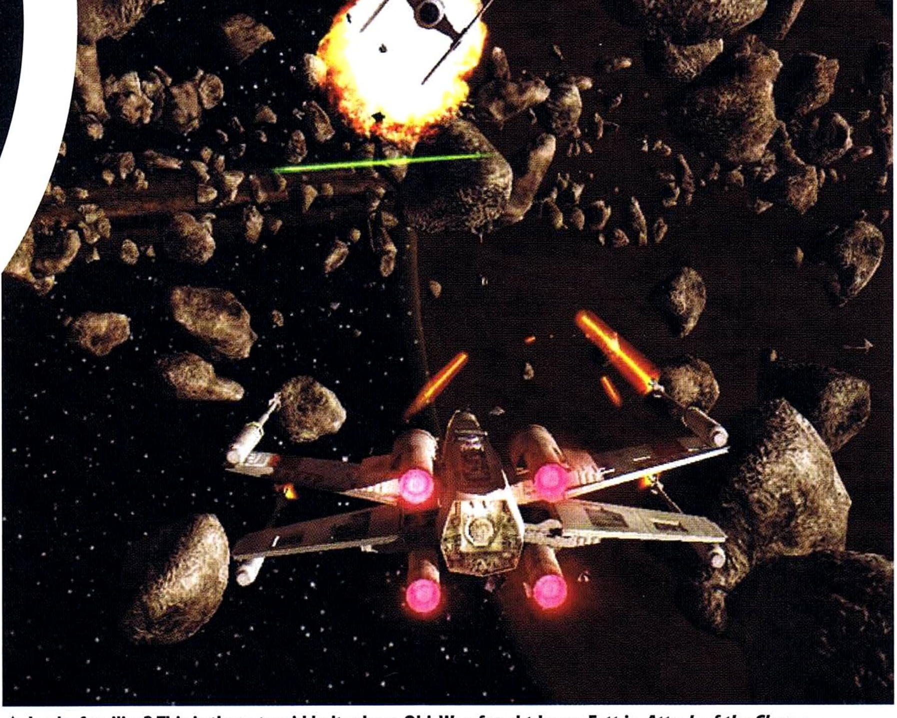
ET: Brosnan, although Connery is a very close second. As a person, he embodies Bond.

SB: I'm a Connery fan. I've become more of a Pierce fan now though.

JW: I like them all for different reasons. Connery is *the* Bond tough guy. Moore's an English gentleman. Brosnan… he's just awesome.

DID YOU KNOW? Pierce Brosnan paid an astonishing £52,800 for Ian Fleming's typewriter.





△ Looks familiar? This is the asteroid belt where Obi-Wan fought Jango Fett in *Attack of the Clones*.

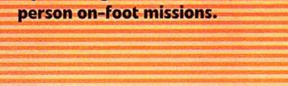


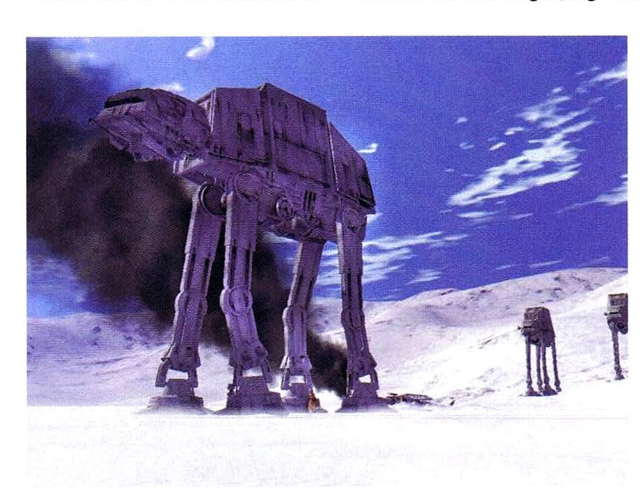
△ AT-ST versus two Stormtroopers. Our money is on the mech.



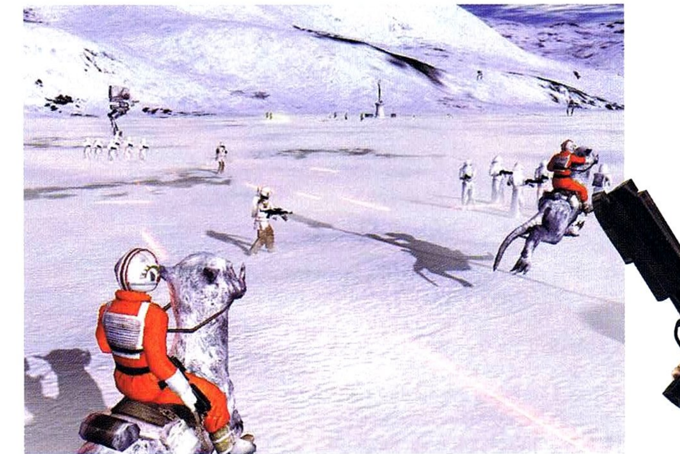
THE KNOWLEDGE

- Has a completely redesigned game engine.
- Full version of *Rogue Squadron II* playable in multiplayer mode.
- About half an hour of DVD-quality film footage.
- This will be the first *Rogue Squadron* game to feature third-person on-foot missions.





△ Taking down the AT-ATs can be a little time-consuming on-foot.



△ Unfortunately, you can't slice the buggers open...



FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Factor 5

What have they done before?
Rogue Squadron II (NGC/68, 87%)
Absolutely superb, with silky-smooth battles on planets like Hoth and in space above.

ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE

Relive the greatest moments of the original trilogy.



From sandy Tattooine to the oceans of Naboo, Star Wars fans love the universe that George Lucas created. We all do. And while George has been focussing on the new trilogy, Factor 5 have spent their time revisiting the original three movies with *Rogue Squadron III: Rebel Strike*.

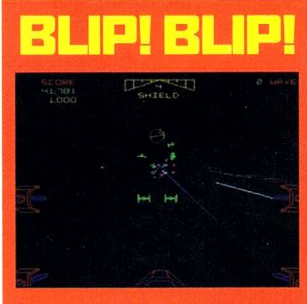
If you're familiar with the *Rogue Squadron* series, you'll take to *Rebel Strike* immediately. The engine has been re-designed, but Factor 5 didn't gurn around with the good stuff. Controls have been kept simple, so *Rebel Strike's* got a bit of an arcadey feel. However, each vehicle has its own physics model, so while the basic controls are the same, they all feel distinctive and different.

While most of the game is still vehicle-based, you now have the ability to leave your tin box behind and expose yourself to the elements. In fact, you *have* to do this, because some levels can only be completed with a bit of third-person pedestrian action. The most obvious example is the 'Escape from the Death Star' episode first seen in *A New Hope*. Playing as Luke Skywalker, you and Han must rescue Princess Leia before she's executed.

The level begins in the security room with the droids. You and Han, dressed as Stormtroopers, make your way to the detention block with Chewie. Little touches, such as the skittering maintenance droid, abound. Once Leia is in tow, you have to perform the rescue – right down to the famous chasm swing – while fending off constant attacks.

The third-person sections have a real adventure game feel at this

BLIP! BLIP!



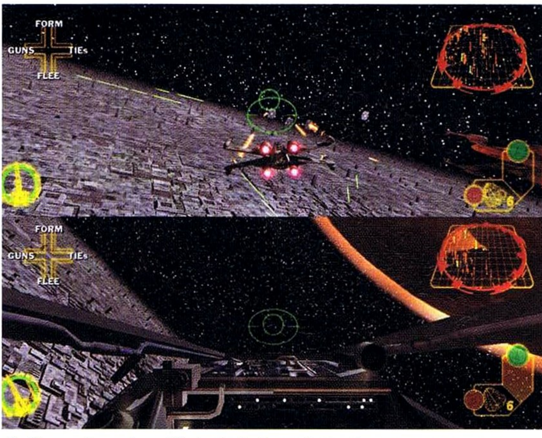
Borrowing an idea from Ninty's *Zelda* promotion, LucasArts are going to offer a *Rebel Strike* bonus disc to everyone who pre-orders the game. It features a playable level and advertising material, but the real gem is a full version of the 1982 vector graphics *Star Wars* arcade game. Perfectly emulated, it plays just as well today as it did then. While the disc has been announced for the US, we're hoping that Activision will offer it to European gamers too.

DID YOU KNOW? Ewan McGregor's uncle, Denis Lawson, played Wedge Antilles in the original film trilogy.



△ The sheer number of enemy fighters can be a bit overwhelming. Stick to your primary targets.

△ As much as we like the farmboy, Han Solo looks much more imposing with a blaster.



△ *Rogue Squadron II* is included as a two-player co-op game.





△ Use the displays for help – Luke's a Jedi, but you're not.

stage, mainly owing to the fixed camera angles used in the Death Star level. We've quizzed Factor 5 about the possibility of a roaming camera – they're looking into it. In fact, one of the Hoth levels gave us an early look at a moving camera in action…

After crashing his Snow Speeder, Luke has to destroy two AT-ATs. When you've done that, you have to get back to base, where Luke can man a laser cannon, FPS-style. The switch from third- to first-person happens seamlessly, with hardly a disruption. We're hoping that every change in perspective will be as slick.

Perhaps the most exciting level we've experienced is the speeder bike chase, which mixes elements of just about every racer you've ever played. Not only do you have to avoid laser blasts from enemies, you also have to watch out for hazards like tree branches. Even if the rest of the game turned out to be rubbish, *Rebel Strike* would be worth buying for this alone.

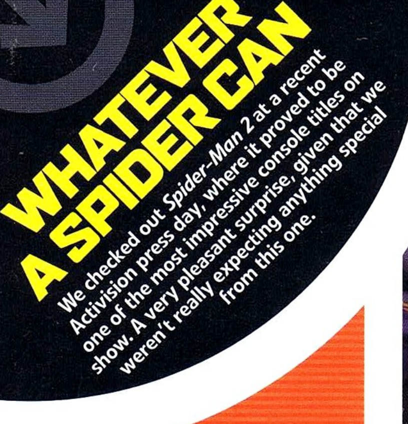
In another Endor level, you commandeer an AT-ST. It's a heavy and sluggish machine, but what it loses in speed, it makes up in firepower. Sadly, Ewoks seem to be immune to it. We did try.

All the primary missions in Rebel Strike are single-player, but Factor 5 haven't overlooked the multiplayer option. They've included the fantastic *Rogue Squadron II* as a co-operative multiplayer mode. There's a competitive multiplayer option too, where players are pitted against one another in a combat arena.

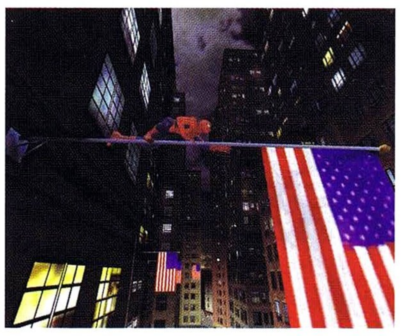
As cool as all of this is, Factor 5 only showed us half of the game. As well as Luke's path, *Rebel Strike* will also feature a storyline revolving around another member of Rogue Squadron – Wedge Antilles. Play as Wedge and you'll be able to take part in events that happened off-screen in the original trilogy.

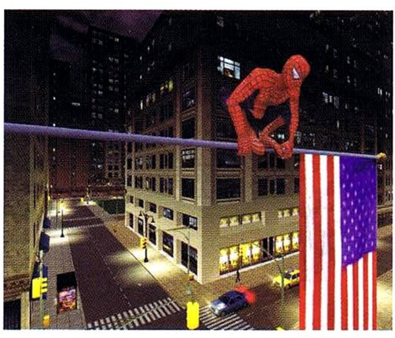
Even at this early stage gamers are getting excited about *Rebel Strike*. If the final version matches the levels we've played, it's a sure-fire October hit…

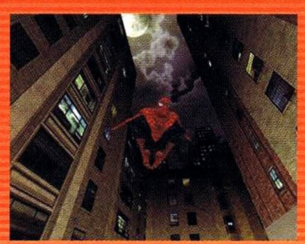
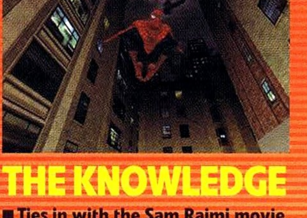





△ Shoot two webs to dangle between buildings, high above the streets.


△ Flagpoles exist only to serve as makeshift perches for wall-crawling superheroes.

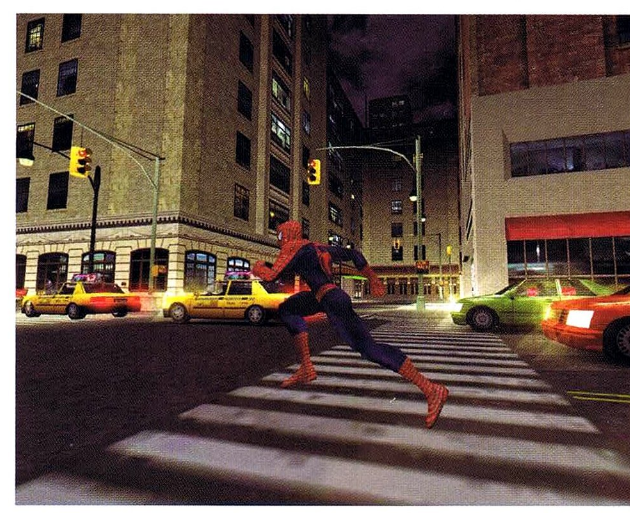

△ From up there, you get a great view of any crimes being committed in the neighbourhood.

THE KNOWLEDGE

- Ties in with the Sam Raimi movie of the same name, and will be released on the same day as the film next summer.
- Go anywhere (including up) in a seamless cityscape.
- Patrol Manhattan in search of random crimes or follow the movie's storyline.
- Win hero points by taking care of citizens' problems.
- Swing from buildings, lamp posts, flag poles or helicopters.
- It's like Spider-Man meets *Grand Theft Auto*.


△ Diving off buildings looks spectacular. Spidey saves himself from a sticky end by firing webs at the sides of skyscrapers, like only a spider can.


△ Faster than a speeding car. Maybe he should enter the Olympics or become a professional sportsman. Money, Spidey. *Money.*

SPIDER-MAN 2

Crawling up walls and cracking wise at a cinema near you.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Treyarch

What have they done before?
Spider-Man The Movie (NGC/69, 72%)
Decent Spidey effort with some of the worst voice-acting we've ever had to endure.



No matter how the movie turns out, we can be sure that the accompanying game won't be suffering from a chronic case of sequelitis. This is quite a radical departure from previous Spider-Man titles, with a free-form structure reminiscent of games such as *GTA*.

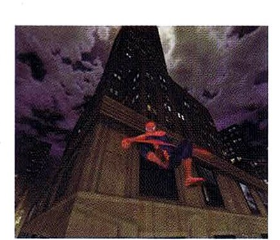
> RID THE STREETS OF PETTY CRIME BEFORE CONTINUING WITH THE MAIN MISSION

Spidey can go anywhere he likes, ridding the streets of petty crime to boost his stats before continuing with the main mission. Climb all the way to the top of a skyscraper and the entire city is visible, right down to the tiny cars on the streets. Then, best of all, it's possible to take a swan dive from the very top, plummeting past high-rise office windows, the pavement looming at terminal velocity, before firing off a web and swinging away across the lower rooftops.

No superhero game has worked quite like this before. If you can see it, you can climb to it, and Spidey's webs actually have to attach to solid objects to invoke the pendulum physics that sees him zooming through the city in such a thrillingly Spider-Man sort of way.

How the actual gameplay fits in with the cool moves is something we've yet to discover, but with an engine like this, it looks likely to be the best Spider-Man game ever. Fingers crossed.


△ He runs on walls, using short bursts of super-power.


△ You can climb all the way to the top, if you feel like it.

NGC VERDICT

Because the game is being developed closely with the movie, we weren't allowed to see anything that might give away too many secrets. So no villains, story scenes or interior locations. But the street scenes did look the business, with petty criminals to fight and random missions to locate. All in all, highly promising.



UK 2004 | US 2004 | JAPAN 2004

ANTICIPATION RATING
1 2 3 **4** 5

DID YOU KNOW? The 2002 Spider-Man flick was the ninth-biggest grossing movie ever, raking in a staggering $820 million. There'll be a sequel every two years until the end of the universe.



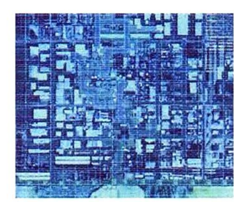
HUNTING SEASON IS NOW OPEN
XBOX WORLD GAME OF THE MONTH
"Alongside Halo in the list of Xbox Shooters you simply must own"
9/10
PSi2
"Exceptional."
9/10
PSW
"Mace Griffin is Halo for Playstation2. It's that good."
9/10
MACE GRIFFIN™
BOUNTY HUNTER
Fight your way through a universe of huge corporations, strange religious sects and futuristic gun-slingers. Travel seamlessly from ground to space tracking prey, unravelling a deep and very dangerous mystery.
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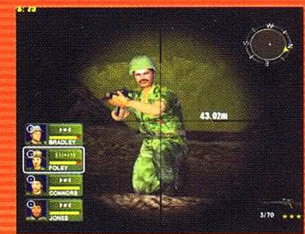
△ On your belly, you can now roll from side to side.





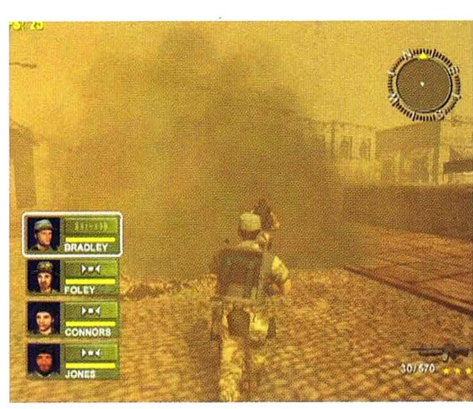


△ You can assign all kinds of commands, giving you total control over your team.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- The second of Pivotal's tactical, team-based shooters set in and around the Gulf War conflict.
- Superbly detailed environments populated by remarkably intelligent enemies. Use your multitalented task force to take them down in a multitude of different ways.
- Play with up to four players for some cracking co-operative action.



△ *Desert Storm* was never shy with the explosions.



△ Despite lacking a little in the way of visual polish, the game is still very atmospheric. It'll have you on the edge of your seat as you struggle to ensure your guys survive.



FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Pivotal

What have they done before?
Conflict: Desert Storm (NGC/80) 89%
The first of these tactical Gulf War shooters.

CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2

When I was a lad this was all sand. Sand as far as the eye could see… and now look at it…

We have an affinity for *Conflict: Desert Storm* round here. Maybe it's because developers Pivotal seem to be in that tiny minority that actually properly *optimised* their port when it came to Gamecube. Or maybe it's just because *C:DS* was, without question, a thoroughly enjoyable tactical shooter. Oh, and it didn't stink of Clancy either. Which in our book is a mighty fine thing indeed.

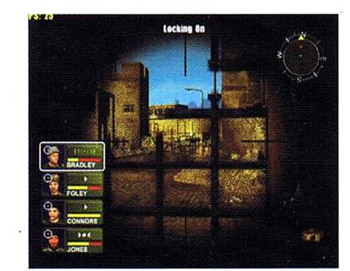


WHAT'S FOR DESERT?

For those of you who (criminally) missed out on the first game, *Conflict: Desert Storm* follows the exploits of two teams (Delta Force and the SAS) as they battle it out for supremacy in the deserts of Iraq.

Strategy, quick thinking, stealth and good old gun-toting violence are all key to victory in equal measure – a little like Ubi Soft's *Rainbow Six*… er… except not really. You see, while *Rainbow Six* can be tedious, frustrating and strategic to the point of being unnecessarily fiddly, *Conflict: Desert Storm* is far more accessible and – once you get your head around the controls – wonderfully instinctive.

You take control of a team of four and you can access each member individually by hitting the D-pad. You can also split the team up into different-sized groups and command those that you're not controlling directly to follow you, wait, fire at will and so on. You can also direct individual members to run over to various positions and even stipulate which direction you want them to face when they get there. This kind of control over the team creates great, open-ended solutions to any problems you face. For example, you can either keep



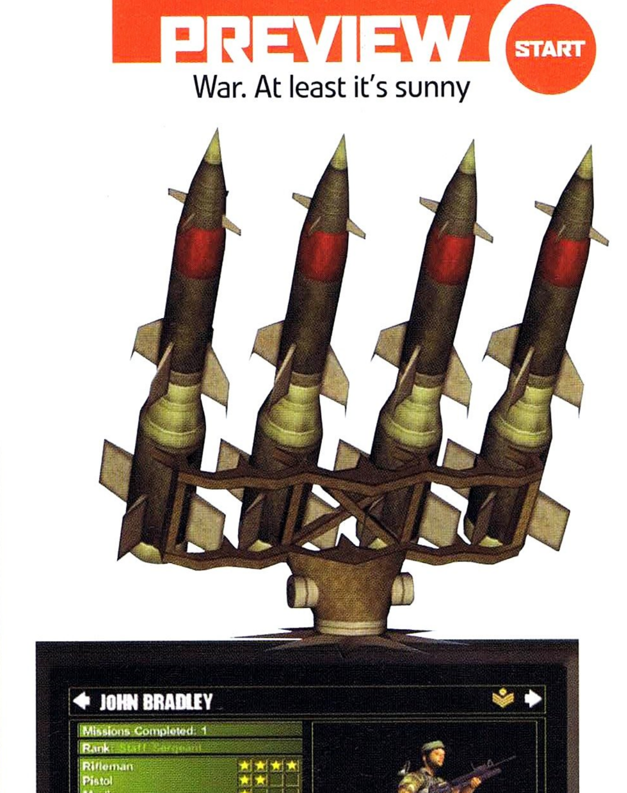
△ Peeking through this window, you can see a tank behind the barricade.

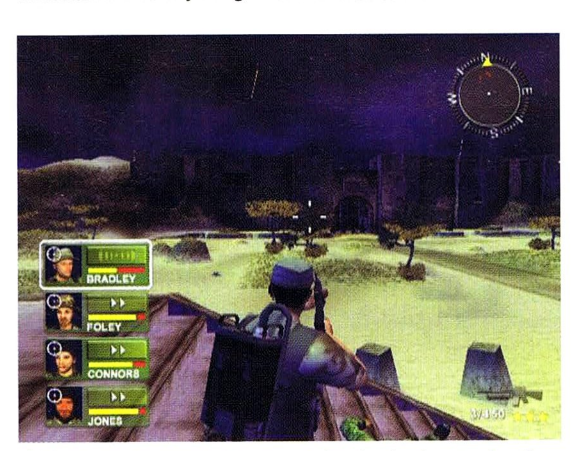


△ You can call in an airstrike using your laser-targeting thingamebob.



▲ To be honest, the game's looking a little rough in places at the moment. Character animation isn't too hot, and when soldiers are too close together, they sometimes merge into one another. We're confident this'll be sorted by *C:DS2's* release.

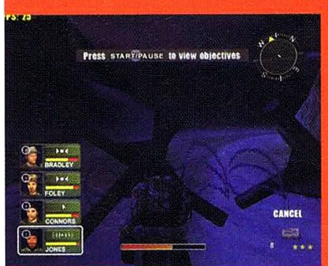




▲ You have to ensure that every member of your team survives. At the mission's end you'll get a break down of their stats.

SPLIT 'EM UP

One of the important tactics for the game is to use your men for specific jobs rather than keep them all bunched together.



■ Once you've cleared out the first section of the level, you need to use your demolitions expert to take out this barricade using explosives.



■ Taking control of this building, you can then use the roof to position a sniper. Leave him alone to do his job and he'll kill any enemies in range.



■ With the gate to the city covered by your sniper, you can take the rest of the guys around the side to take control of this gun emplacement.

TEAM UP



One of the best aspects of *Conflict: Desert Storm 2* is the superb multiplayer. When played with two players, each player has control of two team members making completing some of the levels far more manageable as, effectively, the amount you have to think about is cut in half. With four players, though, the game experience completely changes. With each player taking control of one member of the individually skilled strike force, any tactics that you employ in the mission have to be relayed to each other verbally. It makes for a very entertaining night's (and early morning's) gaming. Fantastic.

your team together and rely on your combined, concentrated fire power to clear out areas. Or, alternatively, you can set a sniper up on an elevation with a good view of the area and send one team member to run across the enemies' line of sight as a distraction while the last two bring up the rear for a surprise attack – assuming the sniper hasn't taken care of them already.

REAL 'EM IN

Pivotal seem to have got the balance between realism and accessibility spot on. While the sound effects, explosions, projectile trajectories and so on all give a tremendous feeling of realism to the proceedings, the game is never bogged down by being too ambitious or over-complicated. If anything, this latest installment in the series seems to be moving ever so slightly further away from the realistic approach. Instead, *C:DS2* is much more cinematic and atmospheric. While many of the missions in the first game were rather bleak (well it, *was* in the desert, after all), this time the game takes place in much more claustrophobic environments, with urban warfare featuring far more than before.

The buildings are a welcome addition as the game *looks* much better for them. There's a distinct reduction in fogging (which was all too evident in the first game) and the change of environment makes for a much more detailed, and ultimately interesting, setting.

Another of the big changes to the game is that in order to finish each mission you have to keep your entire squad alive – you're not allowed to let any of them die. While making finishing each level a slightly tougher prospect, we think this is a very smart move. Anyone who's played the first game will admit to feeling a certain bond with their team members, and being placed in situations where you have to rescue fallen comrades will enhance that feeling of camaraderie.

Suffice to say, then, *C:DS2* really can't come soon enough.

▲ Thanks to the more built up areas, fogging has been reduced.

NGC VERDICT



So far this is shaping up to be a genuine improvement over a game that was already outstanding. There's still some work to be done, however, particularly with the balancing of the difficulty level and, hopefully, the respawning enemies won't be quite as annoying as they were in the first game. See how it fares in our review next issue…

UK	US	JAPAN
OCTOBER	OCTOBER	UNLIKELY

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 5




△ Explore the back gardens for coins…


△ Smash up phone boxes for more cash.


△ Accept mini-tasks to boost your earnings.



△ You'll never tire of shattering Krusty ads.



△ An easy mission, this one…


△ The school bus is a little sluggish.


△ Make the hidden jump over the fire engine and you get a cutaway shot, a la *Vice City*.

THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN

Grand Theft Auto: Springfield. It's time for Homer to get nasty…

To be honest, we're not *entirely* comfortable with Homer going nuts in the School Bus, ploughing through a graveyard, running over pensioners and taking out anyone – *anyone* – who gets in the way. On a more positive note, at least it doesn't take long to learn the quickest way to the Kwick-E-Mart.

The Simpsons Hit & Run is surprisingly addictive. As we were putting the issue to press, we managed to get our hands on a full build of the game – and it's taken quite a while to prise it out of Marcus' hands. What starts off as a simple 'drive here, buy some soda' style of free-roam-'em-up soon opens up into a gripping tale of one man's desire to do right by his family… okay, okay, and the chance to terrorise your favourite yellow cartoon misfits.

The way it works is simple. An on-screen prompt lets you know which character you need to meet or which location you need to get to. Once there, you can accept a mission. These range from simple races around Springfield to the slightly more demanding 'race around Springfield collecting stuff'.

> **"MEET A FAMOUS FACE AND THE CAMERA SWINGS DOWN TO REVEAL THEM IN FULL 3D"**

Maybe that is a bit unfair. For a start you don't actually have to drive anywhere – you can take off around Springfield on foot, and certain missions demand that you do so. You'll get to explore inside locations such as the the Power Plant and the Simpsons house itself – as Homer, Bart, Marge, Lisa and Apu.

The detailing in the environment is astounding – Simpsons fans are, quite literally, going to be in their element. Springfield looks huge, and there are plenty of side-challenges to let you explore the place.

The characer modelling is equally as slick – meet a famous face, and the camera swings down to reveal them in their beautifully rendered, fully 3D form.

With its emphasis on reward-for-destruction play, throwaway one-liners and hidden jokes, this'll be a Simpsons fan's dream.

Expect *Hit & Run* on 7th November

DID YOU KNOW? With 56 missions in total, the game's supposed to last you around 30 hours…



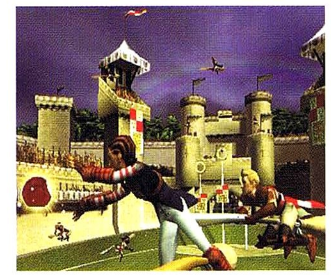
△ Homer's workstation at the power plant. The first mission here comes with a tight time limit...



△ Too much damage = dead car.

△ The more coins you collect, the more cars you can buy.





HARRY POTTER QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP

Not content with owning the number one franchises to the most popular sports on the Earth, EA are moving into the realm of fictional sports as well.

The rules of Quidditch aren't quite as complicated as they first appear. Two teams of seven players face each other in a battle to grab the 'snitch', a tiny hovering orb that, once caught by a team's seeker means game over and (usually) victory, as it's worth 150 points. Throw beaters, bludgers, keepers and chasers into the mix and you've got... okay, a slightly confusing multiplayer mix. How you judge your skill is anyone's guess...

The game's going multi-format at the end of October, but the Gamecube version'll be the most innovative, with a GBA link-up option. Once the hardware's joined, your GBA will allow you to control the movement of the seeker when it's time to catch the snitch.

Available on 31st October



NFL STREET

Right, not hard to explain this one. It's *Madden* mixed with *NBA Street*. An arcade blast of backstreet seven-on-seven American football, packing 300 of the NFL's most intimidating players, their features exaggerated to the extreme. Just take a look at the new shot above.

It borrows heavily from the EA Big bag of tricks, with Showboat points being awarded for impressive plays. Pull in enough points and you'll be rewarded with a Gamebreaker. These allow your already incredibly resilient players to storm through the opposition's deee-fence. Naturally this all gets accentuated with a burst of hip-hop. Because it's street, see?

The game takes in a mixture of environments. As well as typical American backlots, you'll get to face off in a park and on a beach – with the resulting change in surface demanding a change in your starting line-up.

Should appeal to everyone who's getting a little tired of *Madden*...

Available early next year



FIFA 2004

Bigger, better, more, more, *more*...





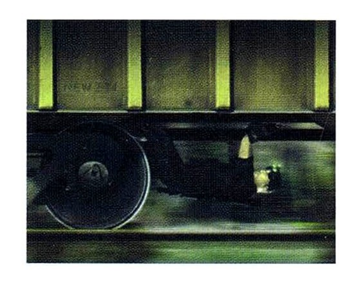
Let's get the numbers out of the way immediately: 350 teams! 10,000 players! 300 new crowd chants! Er... Oggy, Oggy! And that.

There'll come a point when EA just can't squeeze anything else onto a *FIFA* disc. We haven't reached it yet though. Developed deep in the bowels of Canada, its 2004 incarnation sees the series getting a slicker game engine, new depth to the controls and a demanding set of player-manager challenges.

The Off The Ball system's the most important addition. It allows you to move other players while still retaining a little control over the man with the ball. You toggle a button to pull the camera back, revealing three players with icons over their heads. Hold down a corresponding button and you're put in control of that player. Release it, and the player with the ball will launch a pass his way. Nifty.

Transferred out on 17th October





SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

Recently released brand-new screens reveal just how dark the sequel to the, frankly, not very well ported across *Splinter Cell* (see p47) will be.

Sam Fisher returns for another dose of stealthy murder, this time set across more realistic locations and, as is apparent from the shots, steeped in a more cinematic visual style. (Sam Fisher – *under a train!*)

It's already been confirmed that *Pandora Tomorrow* will offer a gripping multiplayer experience, with the opportunity to take your covert ops online – the potential for some tense head-to-head scenarios is impressive.

As is the way, though, there's been no confirmation that the Gamecube version will incorporate an online element. What do you reckon? We predict that instead of this, there'll be an innovative GBA>GC link feature. Oh yes.

Metal Gear'll be out before it – more on that next issue...

Available early next year



BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG

Created by Yuji Naka, Sega's 'equivalent' of Miyamoto – it was his vision that delivered *Sonic* and *Phantasy Star* to the world – comes this Gamecube-exclusive tale of a boy trying to return light to his dim home world. The clever stuff comes from the use of the eggs. Billy has to take care of the remarkably realistically animated eggs (trust us for a moment...) rolling them around the levels, avoiding enemies, and, once the eggs are ready, clicking the R button to hatch them. The various creatures that pop out from the shell aren't quite what you'd expect – a penguin, a seal... – and by pressing X you can use their different powers for your own sick entertainment. Nice.

First four-player screenshots right up there for you...

***Billy* hatches on 14th November**

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

The skateboard game that isn't entirely about half-pipes, rails and ramps…



Much as we like his games, another reworking of the familiar *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* format might be a sequel too far for the venerable series.

Tony Hawk's Underground is the game that addresses this issue, adapting the powerful stunt system to something more like an adventure game.

In *Underground*, you play a wannabe skate hero who learns to adapt his street-skating skills to the lucrative world of professional skateboarding competitions.

Once you've created your own character, a series of encounters with real-world skaters nudges you gently onto the path to greatness. It's sort of like the movie 8 Mile. Or Flashdance. Yes.

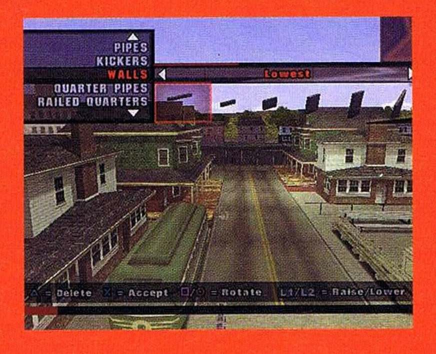
Much of the skating takes place in the city, and – a novel new idea – you can actually get off the board and do some exploring by climbing onto rooftops. It's sort of like *Grand Theft Auto*. Or *Mario Sunshine*. Mmm. Yeees.

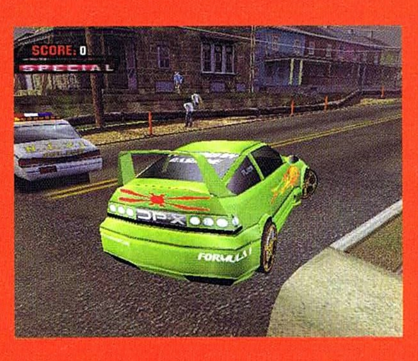
There are new combos that use this feature, allowing a few seconds of running and jumping before getting back on the board and continuing the move.

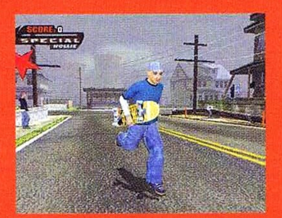
Further refinements to the successful *Tony Hawk's* formula include the opportunity to drive around in a wide variety of vehicles, plus a comprehensive editing mode that allows you to create brand-new tricks and huge skate parks.

All in all, very promising. Roll on the winter…

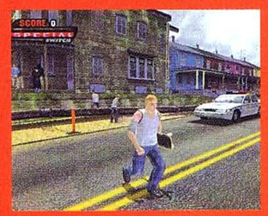
***Underground's* slated for November**



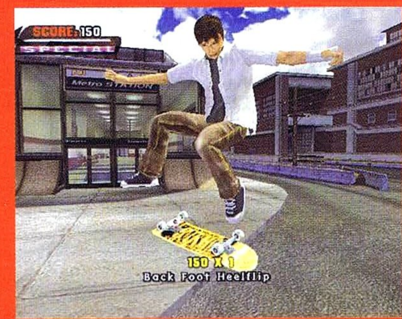












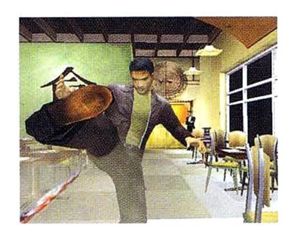


BANJO KAZOOIE

If you've already glanced at Newsdesk this month, you'll have picked up that THQ are to publish a batch of Rare games on GBA. First up's *Banjo-Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge*, which sees Banjo travelling back through history to defeat Gruntilda. Expect six worlds and more than 60 'contests'.

Further GBA releases from Rare's catalogue will include *Banjo Pilot*, *It's Mr Pants* (oh dear…) and – this is the big one – *Sabre Wulf*. It's good to have you back, boys…

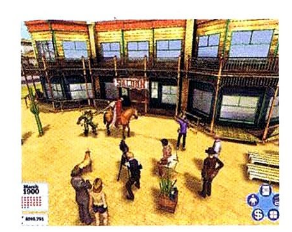
Watch out for it in September



TRUE CRIME

We'll be honest here, Activision's ambitious free-roaming, chop-socky-'em-up isn't the *greatest* thing we've ever seen (ooh, that facial animation…) but it seems to hold together pretty well. It's got an absolutely massive play area (anyone who's been to LA will be able to pick out their favourite landmarks), and the fighting system's remarkably intelligent – the fixed camera views make the fight scenes feel like beat-'em-ups in their own right. The game to kill *GTA* dead?

Out on 14th November



THE MOVIES

Gaming legend Peter Molyneux recently showed us an early PC version of this Hollywood sim, and it's destined to be a huge hit on Gamecube as well. The big draw here? It's possible to make short versions of virtually every major movie, tweaking them to add your own humour as you aim to build a studio empire over the course of a century. The amount of detail that's being crammed in is astounding – the only downer's the release date.

Available by Christmas 2004



X-MEN LEGENDS

Developed by Raven Software – the team responsible for the bloody *Soldier of Fortune* games – this 'action-RPG' has a real emphasis on teamwork.

After setting the attitutide of your teammates in real time, you can go on to issue commands to them on the fly in battle, instructing your nearest friendly X-Man to knock out a combo on a nearby enemy or roll out a devastating special move. You'll also have to adopt this teamwork to puzzle-solving if you're to get ahead…

Due in March – watch it slip…



PITFALL HARRY

The original *Pitfall* was a seriously tough, incredibly basic platform game for the Atari VCS. It had plenty of fans – mainly American – hence this latest update.

The Gamecube outing is flashy, slick, and has a difficulty level aimed at the younger market. It's a bit like *Crash Bandicoot* in some places and *Banjo-Kazooie* in others, as Harry explores a mysterious lost jungle in search of hidden treasure. The hand-control system takes a little getting used to though.

Available in October

ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – although be aware that slippages can occur. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

SEPTEMBER

5	Disney's Skate Adventure	Activision
12	Digimon Battle Spirit (GBA)	Atari
12	Jet Set Radio (GBA)	Atari
12	Space Channel 5 (GBA)	Atari
12	Madden NFL 2004	EA
12	Robocop (GBA)	Avalon
12	The Italian Job	Eidos
16	WWE Wrestlemania XIX	THQ
19	Freedom Fighters	EA
19	Galador	EA
19	Golden Sun: The Lost Age (GBA)	Nintendo
19	NHL 2004	EA
26	The Hobbit (GBA)	Vivendi
26	Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi
26	Soul Calibur 2	Nintendo
26	Starsky & Hutch	Empire
26	Starsky & Hutch (GBA)	Empire
26	Super Bust-A-Move 2: All Stars	Ubi Soft
26	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	EA
26	Wallace & Gromit	Bam
TBC	Harry Potter & The Philosopher's Stone: Next Generation	EA
TBC	Lego Bionicle (GBA)	THQ

OCTOBER

3	Bulletproof Monk	Empire
3	Finding Nemo	THQ
3	Finding Nemo (GBA)	THQ
3	Urban Freestyle Soccer	Acclaim
10	Bionicle	EA
10	Lego Drome Racers	EA
10	NBA Live 2004	EA
10	XGRA	Acclaim
17	Barbarian	Avalon
17	Disney's Party	EA
17	FIFA 2004	EA
24	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari
24	SSX3	EA
24	Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Vivendi
31	Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi
31	F-Zero GX	Nintendo
31	Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA
31	I-Ninja	Namco
31	Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour	Nintendo
31	NHL Hitz Pro	Midway
31	Rogue Squadron 3	Activision
31	Worms 3D	Sega
TBC	Advance Wars 2 (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Conflict Desert Storm 2	SCi
TBC	Final Fantasy Tactics (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Gladius	Activision
TBC	Pokémon Box	Nintendo
TBC	Super Mario Bros 3 (GBA)	Nintendo

NOVEMBER

7	Rogue Squadron 3	Activision
7	The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	EA
7	The Simpsons Hit & Run	Vivendi
7	SSX3 (GBA)	EA
7	Tony Hawk Underground	Activision
14	Billy Hatcher & the Giant Egg	Sega
14	Boktai (GBA)	Konami
14	The Hobbit	Vivendi
14	James Bond 007 in... Everything or Nothing	EA
14	Judge Dredd: Dredd vs Death	Vivendi
14	Kirby's Air Ride	Nintendo
14	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA
14	Metal Arms	Vivendi
14	MTV Celebrity Deathmatch	Take two
14	Onimusha Tactics (GBA)	Capcom
14	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami
14	Terminator: Rise of the Machines (GBA)	Atari
14	True Crime	Activision
14	Viewtiful Joe	Capcom
21	Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubi Soft
21	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (GBA)	Ubi Soft
21	Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life	Ubi Soft
21	Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town (GBA)	Ubi Soft
21	Prince of Persia (GBA)	Ubi Soft
23	Pikmin 2	Nintendo
28	Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	Nintendo
28	Roadkill	Midway
TBC	Hot Wheels: Highway 35 World Race	THQ
TBC	Hot Wheels: Highway 35 World Race (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion	THQ
TBC	Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Mario & Luigi (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Mission: Impossible Operation Surma	Atari
TBC	Need for Speed Underground	EA
TBC	Pokémon Pinball: Ruby/Sapphire (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Power Rangers: Ninja Storm (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Sphinx & the Shadow of Set	THQ
TBC	Spongebob Squarepants: Bikini Bottom	THQ
TBC	Spongebob Squarepants: Bikini Bottom (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (GBA)	Konami
TBC	Tony Hawk Underground (GBA)	Activision

DEC / 'WINTER'

5	XIII	Ubi Soft
9	Monster Truck Madness (GBA)	THQ
9	Star Wars: Flight of the Falcon (GBA)	THQ

TBC 2003

1080° Avalanche	Nintendo
Bad Boys II	Empire
Dragon's Lair 3D	THQ
Extreme Force	Namco
Goblin Commander	Jaleco
Good Cop Bad Cop	Revolution
Good Cop Bad Cop (GBA)	Revolution
Gotcha Force	Capcom
I-Ninja	Namco
Mario & Donkey Kong (GBA)	Nintendo
Mario Party 5	Nintendo
Metal Gear: The Twin Snakes	Konami
Nightmare Creatures	Ubi Soft
R: Racing Evolution	Namco
Robocop	Avalon
Rogue Ops	Kemco
Scary Tales	Wanadoo
Sim City 2000 (GBA)	Zoo
Spawn	Namco

FEBRUARY 2004

14	Beyblade (GBA)	Atari

MARCH 2004

5	Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo
5	Sonic Heroes	Sega
5	X-Men Legends	Activision
TBC	Pillage	Zed Two
TBC	Pitfall Harry	Activision
TBC	Pitfall Harry (GBA)	Activision
TBC	Tak & The Power of JuJu	THQ

APRIL 2004

TBC	Full Throttle 2	Activision

MAY 2004

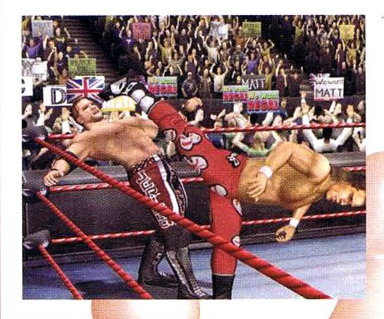
5	The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA
7	Spider-Man 2	Activision

TBC 2004

Animal Crossing 2	Nintendo
Area 51	Midway
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubi Soft
Custom Robo	Nintendo
Custom Robo GX (GBA)	Nintendo
ESPionage	Midway
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles	Nintendo
Fire Emblem (GBA)	Nintendo
Game Zero (Working Title)	Zoo
Geist	Nintendo
Hitman 3	Eidos
Killer 7	Capcom
Mario Tennis	Nintendo
Mario Tennis (GBA)	Nintendo
Metroid Prime 2	Nintendo
Metroid: Zero Mission (GBA)	Nintendo
Mortal Kombat 2	Midway
The Movies	Activision
NARC	Midway
Pac-Man	Nintendo/Namco
Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution	Sega
Pokémon Channel	Nintendo
Prince of Persia	Ubi Soft
Resident Evil 4	Capcom
Roll-o-Rama	Nintendo
Spy Hunter 2	Midway
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
Star Fox 2	Nintendo
Super Mario 128	Nintendo
The Suffering	Midway
Sword of Mana (GBA)	Nintendo
Tales of Symphonia	Namco
Unity	Lionhead
Zelda: Tetra's Trackers	Nintendo
Zelda: The Four Swords	Nintendo

US RELEASES

The most important US releases. Fancy importing one?





SEPTEMBER

9	WWE Wrestlemania XIX	THQ
19	Boktai (GBA)	Konami
24	Billy Hatcher & the Giant Egg	Sega

OCTOBER

2	Goblin Commander	Jaleco
8	SSX3	EA
15	Rogue Squadron 3	Activision
18	Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA
18	Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life	Natsume
29	Tony Hawk Underground	Activision
30	Pikmin 2	Nintendo

NOVEMBER

5	Rogue Ops	Jaleco
11	Mario Party 5	Nintendo
17	Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	Nintendo
17	Metal Gear: The Twin Snakes	Konami

DECEMBER

1	1080° Avalanche	Nintendo
1	Pokémon Channel	Nintendo
4	Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo

FEBRUARY 2004

9	Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles	Nintendo
18	Starcraft: Ghost	Blizzard

JAP RELEASES

The best future Japanese releases. Crazy great fun.





SEPTEMBER

4	Get Backers Dakkanoku: Jagan Fuuin! (GBA)	Konami
11	Bomberman Generation	Hudson
11	Gekitou Pro Yakyuu	Sega
11	Wagamama*Fury Mirumo de Pon! Taisen Mahoudama (GBA)	Konami
12	Battle x Battle: Kyoudai Ou Densetsu (GBA)	StarFish
12	Naruto: Ki no Ha Senki (GBA)	Tomy
12	Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Children 2 – Hi no Sho (GBA)	Konami
12	Bokujou Monogatari: Wonderful Life	Victor

OCTOBER

3	Tensai Bit-Kun: Gramon Battle	Taito

NOVEMBER

21	Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo
25	Tengai Makyou II: Manjimaru	Hudson

TBC 2003

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	Nintendo
Mario Party 5	Nintendo
Pikmin 2	Nintendo

THESE JUST OUT!

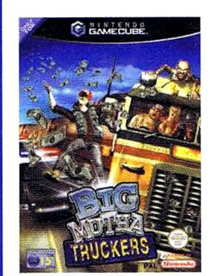
Missed last issue? Here's NGC's pick of the freshest games around…



P.N.03

NGC/84 ■ 77%

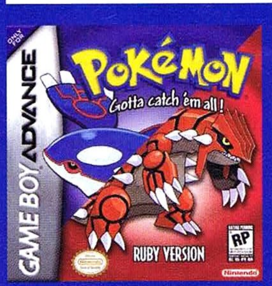
Okay, August was a slow month for Gamecube and GBA releases – but ain't it always, *ain't it aaaaalways*? Still, Capcom's stylish action-shooter, beating the games drought in August, is worth getting a piece of. The only trouble is, it's not really going to last you very long. It's a test of skill all right, but at a fairly stingy 11 levels and six bosses long, you might reach the end quicker than you'd like. Showoffs and gymnastic fans'll still get a kick out of their time spent battling as Vanessa, though. Bleak to look at, but reasonably rewarding to play…



BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

NGC/83 ■ 71%

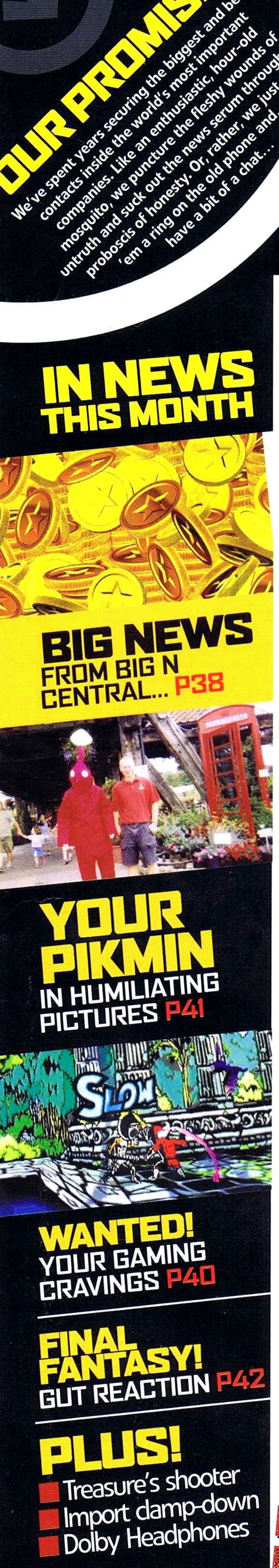
Tricky, this one. We're not *really* recommending it, we're just, y'know, letting you know it's just been released. And it did score a sliver over 70%. It's original, entertaining and tightly constructed. But it's so tight that there's not much room for fun. Maybe that's unfair – it's a fine blend of RPG and racer, with you trucking around Hick State County buying and selling goods. But some of the challenges can drag you down…



POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE

NGC/83 ■ 90%

Tons of fun, despite being just a gentle nudge on for the series rather than a full-scale revolution. And it's sociable gaming at its finest (as ever, you need to trade Pokémon with somebody who owns the other version if you're to catch 'em all). *Ruby* and *Sapphire* hit the games charts at number one and two respectively. Never underestimate the power of Pokémon.







△ The cel-shaded engine will be used for the next *Zelda*.

NINTENDO FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE

NEW GAMES, NEW STRATEGIES AND NEW... HARDWARE? NINTENDO'S HEAD HONCHO REVEALS MAJOR NEW PLANS...



Several days after disclosing how much cash they'd made in the first quarter of 2003, Satoru Iwata, Nintendo's President, held a press conference to talk about the company's plans.

Game-wise, the three main announcements proved rather interesting. The next installment in the *Legend of Zelda* series should be with us next year – that's a little earlier than previously expected. The superb *Wario Ware* is set to get a Gamecube make-over and is expected to hit the shops in Japan this October. Last, and perhaps the biggest surprise of all, *Donkey Kong* is already nearing completion, with a release expected in the latter months of this year. Very little information about *Donkey Kong* has been released as yet, so we don't know exactly how it will shape up, but we do know that Namco are responsible for its development.

GAINING SUPPORT

Nintendo's announcement about the years profits so far wasn't exactly *encouraging*. Nintendo are obviously keen to address the problem, making plenty of noise about how they're looking to expand their 'user base'. First, they're going to introduce a new 'Club Nintendo' service in Japan and the US, whereby customers can earn points from buying Nintendo products – points that can eventually be redeemed for Nintendo hardware/software and other gifts. There's a similar scheme underway in Europe called 'Stars Catalogue' where you register your purchases on the European website and exchange points for a pathetic selection of screensavers and T-shirt transfers. Not exactly the kind of scheme that will improve Nintendo's position. Regardless, Nintendo are looking to gain around 500,000 customers to the club within its first year of operation.

> **"WE'RE PREPARING A PRODUCT WHICH WILL GIVE A FRESH SURPRISE TO CONSUMERS"**

Nintendo were also keen to express their desire to simplify videogames to broaden their appeal.

Second to this they will be looking to improve the quality of their games by co-operating with more software developers and publishers.



NEW SHOOTER FROM TREASURE
A new blaster from the highly regarded Dev Co is always a cause for celebration. Called Dragon Drive: D-Masters Shot, the forthcoming one is a shooter that bears more than a passing resemblance to X-Box's Panzer Dragoon Orta. Dragon Drive will offer free-roaming environments and a multiplayer mode.



GBA BOOSTS PROFITS

Nintendo stated their earnings for the first quarter of 2003 – raking in a massive $95 billion. However, the vast majority was made not through Gamecube, but through GB. Many reports stated that Gamecube had only sold 80,000 units in that time. This figure is incorrect as it's a little nearer 800,000. Still, GBA has been the driving force for Nintendo's profitability, selling through a staggering 3.24 million units, which puts the machine's total user base at around the 37 million mark.

In terms of *worldwide* sales, Nintendo is in second place in the home console market, selling 9.6 million Gamecubes worldwide compared to Xbox's 9.4 million units.



△ **Europe's Stars Catalogue is, basically, a total waste of time.**

NGC ON: THE BIG NEWS

Namco's *Donkey Kong* and *Starfox* are already signs of this, while the Sega co-developed *F-Zero GX* is confirmation enough that it's a very good idea.

The most exciting news to come from the conference, however, was that Nintendo intend to announce an all-new product in Spring 2004.

As Iwata put it: "We are preparing a new game product which will give a fresh surprise to consumers."

However, he refused to elaborate any further, simply describing the product as "unconventional". How frustrating is that?

We seriously doubt that this is will be either GBA's or Gamecube's successor, as Nintendo have already talked quite openly about the fact that both systems are currently in R&D – so this should be something completely unexpected.

We'll keep you up-to-date with developments over coming months.

NEW GAME PRODUCT IN 2004

Martin: <sarcasm>Perhaps it's a colour version of *Pokémon Mini*. Now that would be something special.<sarcasm>

Geraint: A Virtual Boy for the new millennium – without the permanent damage to your eyesight and sanity. Whatever it is I hope it's got nothing to do with GBA-Gamecube connectivity…

Marcus: In light of Sony's toaster-cum-TV-in-your-pocket-station-2, the announcement of a next-gen GBA should really be on the cards. Forget being unique for a second and just be the best… Or maybe it'll be All-New *Pokégotchi*. Like *Tamagotchi*, but with *Pokémon! Yeah*… Anyone got Nintendo's phone number..?

DONKEY KONG GC

Martin: Back-to-basics multiplayer version of the arcade game, with one player controlling Mario, one controlling Kong, and the others being barrels. Maybe not.

Geraint: Can't say I'm DK's biggest fan. If it's going to be attractive to me in any way it'll have to feature completely original content. Like a tick-picking simulator where you have to remove parasites from Cranky Kong's tag-nuts.

Marcus: Wise money's on a reworking of the original. Being cynical, though, there is a chance, after their work on *Starfox 2*, that a free-roaming 3D arena-based coconut-'em-up's on the cards.

WARIO WARE GC

Martin: With little development time, it'll be the same thing except with slightly nicer graphics. Like a fast-paced *Mario Party*.

Geraint: It would be great to see mini versions of Gamecube games in here. Like a short burst in 'Peach's Secret Slide'.

Marcus: I'm with Martin on this. But as long as they keep the oddball humour, there's a chance this could do very well. I doubt they'll change a great deal though. *Monkey Ball* showed that a 'puzzle' game could become the choice of millions, so just maybe…

NEW LEGEND OF ZELDA

Martin: Something with a proper overworld would be great, or a novel concept like *Majora's Mask's* time travel.

Geraint: A new *Zelda* is always good news. How about giving away *Majora's Mask* like they did with *Ocarina of Time*? Or giving us the chance to burn Tingle to his totem pole.

Marcus: I would like to see the series advanced a little more – *Wind Waker* felt too familiar in places. Still, Gamecube's first *Zelda* ended all too quickly. Maybe I do just want more of the same…

CLUB NINTENDO

Martin: Sounds exactly like the European 'Stars Catalogue'. There's no reason for that to exist either. It's rubbish.

Geraint: You'll probably have to save points for the next three years just to get yourself a free joypad. Oh dear.

Marcus: Nintendo 'Nectar points'? Jesus. No comment.

SHORT CUTS

ASIA SPECIFIC

Nintendo is looking to boost its profits is by entering into the problematic Chinese market. While this will broaden their streams of potential revenue, the regulations governing piracy in the region could prove to be something of a nightmare for Nintendo. Cartridge-based systems like N64 weren't 100% safe against piracy, while GBA – the most popular of Nintendo's current consoles – is already the victim of widespread piracy.

THE NEW GAME BOY

While still in its planning stages, Satoru Iwata made some interesting comments about the new Game Boy. Most notably that if Nintendo could solve the issues surrounding unit weight, size and energy consumption, then there's a good chance that Nintendo could ditch the cartridge format in favour of discs.

PYRAMAT

A correction from Gear last month. Rather than being priced at £16, the Pyramat costs £150 and is available from www.pyramat.co.uk.

ARGOS TO DROP GAMECUBE?
Richard E Grant-funding Argos have withdrawn the Gamecube from their catalogue. Dixons (which is part of the same group of stores as Argos) will still continue to sell Gamecube hardware and software, however.

GAMECUBE: EXPENSIVE TO DEVELOP FOR.
According to a recent survey by the Computer Entertainment Suppliers Association, Gamecube is the most expensive console to develop for. Analysis of the Japanese Market found that the average cost of a GC game was £380,000.



DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at ngc@futurenet.co.uk or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.



The 25 games NGC readers are looking forward to more than anything else…



1 MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!

UK NOV | US 2003 | JAPAN 2003

The day of reckoning is almost upon us. Next month we'll give you the skinny on the final version of the game, which is being made playable at this month's ECTS. All will be revealed once we've managed to escape the crowds crammed into Nintendo's sweaty game lorry…



2 F-ZERO GX

UK OCTOBER | US AUGUST | JAPAN NOW

There are many clichéd phrases bandied about by games journalists. "Buttock clenching" being one of the most sickening we can think of – but we've still used it in our massive six-page review. Why? Because in this case it rings perfectly true. Not because we're lame.



3 VIEWTIFUL JOE

UK AUTUMN | US AUTUMN | JAPAN NOW

One of the most refreshing games in recent months, Capcom's side-scrolling comic battler is beautiful to look at, insanely addictive and supremely tough to play. Thankfully you have had the sense to place it higher on your Most Wanted list. Well done. Well done to you.



4 METAL GEAR SOLID

UK TBA 2003 | US TBA 2003 | JAPAN TBA 2003

Bleep! Blork! Bleep! "Hello Snake, this is your Codec talking. I just thought I'd irritate the hell out of you by prattling on about my family, my love life and countless other things you really couldn't give a damn about. This should only take five long, tedious hours… okay?"



5 FINAL FANTASY

UK 2004 | US 2004 | JAPAN NOW

Manipulate four little pixies. All at the same time. Through your GBA! Yup, none of your junctioning, stat-fiddling nosense here. None of your tedious teen angst and love story sequences either. Just good old action-RPGing.



6 MARIO GOLF

UK 2004 | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

Apart from 'stress relief' and the opportunity for people with too much time and money to talk about… well, money, golf is one of the most pointless human pursuits on the planet. *Mario Golf* puts the world to rights by suggesting they play in craters full of lava.



7 STARFOX 2

UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

Still a long way off completion. It moves nice and smoothly, which isn't really surprising because it looks terrible in places. The controls are all screwed too, as is the balancing of the weapons. We have no doubt that it'll be fantastic. They've just got to finish it first…



8 1080° AVALANCHE

UK WINTER | US AUTUMN | JAPAN AUTUMN

All the pleasure of the piste without the pain of slicing your arm on the edge of someone else's skis. Or having your head smacked by the plastic disk on one of those drag-lifts. Or getting slapped by a Belgian girl who wasn't too keen on yo- oops. We've said too much…



9 ROGUE SQUADRON III

UK DEC | US DEC | JAPAN TBA

In yet another display of outrageous generosity, Activision are giving away a bonus disk with pre-orders in the States, this time including an accurately emulated version of the Atari vector-graphics-driven arcade game. How sweet is that?!



THIS MONTH

We've got a copy of *F-Zero* in and we've reviewed it too. Head on over to page 66 to find out exactly how much we liked it. What's more, we've got our initial impressions of *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles* over the page and a review of *Mario Golf* on page 72. Bonus!



#	Game	Description	UK	US	JAPAN
10	HARVEST MOON	Farming and matchmaking.	WINTER	WINTER	SEPT
11	KILLER 7	Christian-baiting ultra-violence	TBA	TBA	TBA
12	BILLY HATCHER	Boy in chicken suit rolls eggs.	XMAS	XMAS	XMAS
13	KIRBY'S AIR RIDE	Very disappointing. See pg74	NOV	NOV	NOW
14	XIII	Promising cel-shaded FPS.	XMAS	XMAS	TBA
15	PIKMIN 2	Gardening. Shigsy-style.	TBA	TBA	TBA
16	METROID PRIME 2	Can it actually get any better?	TBA	TBA	TBA
17	MEDAL OF HONOR: RS	More of the same. In Asia.	NOV	OCT	DOUBT IT
18	UNITY	Kaleidoscopic shooter.	2004	2004	2004
19	JAMES BOND: E.O.N.	Bondage. With Brosnan's face.	WINTER	WINTER	TBA
20	STARCRAFT GHOST	It IS still coming. Honest.	WINTER	WINTER	TBA
21	TRUE CRIME LA	*The Getaway* goes Californian.	TBA	TBA	TBA
22	ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS	The GBA game, on your GC.	TBA	TBA	WINTER
23	BEYOND GOOD & EVIL	Odd-looking French adventure.	OCTOBER	OCTOBER	TBA
24	DRIVER 3	Drive away from crimes. Fast.	2004	2004	TBA
25	PAC-MAN	Freaky retro link-up action.	TBA	TBA	TBA

WRITE TO… MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

VIRTUAL REALITY YOU

NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.

THIS MONTH

Running around your local garden centre dressed as a vegetable...



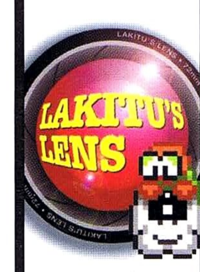
THE PHOTOS

Oh the humiliation! But it's got to be worth it, right?! Who in their right mind wouldn't want... erm, an extra 70 points for their I'm The Best (p94) league total? Matthew Pellet from Spalding wants it, for sure. Fair play to him, he can rest easy in the knowledge that he had the whole office in tears of laughter for the rest of the month.



THE VIDEO

It just gets better and better. Rex McGee from Trowbridge took some highly amusing video footage of himself prancing around his local garden centre – which, strangely enough, is the place new girl Mim buys her manure from – dressed in a red tracksuit and a Pikmin mask. We hope you're proud of yourself, Rex.



Seen Peach in the background of Showgirls? Mario on one of your dad's secret videos he hides under the bed? Let us know...





'COMEDY'

Tom Archer from Derby says this was taken from the 'classic' BBC comedy 'My Family'. The episode showed the irritating brat, Michael, playing a Game Boy. Hopefully the next scene showed pretend dentist Robert Lindsay trying to squeeze it into his fat little mouth...

WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

Our favourite entry (with photo or video evidence) will win a random GBA or Gamecube game.

MK@ECTS

Nintendo bring Mario Kart: Double Dash!! to Britain! In a lorry.



At the time of writing, we're getting ready for our annual trip to ECTS – Europe's No.1 videogame trade show, held for three days in late summer at Earls Court.

This year, Nintendo have decided to grace the event with their presence, but they're not exactly exhibiting in the usual way. This time they're going to park a 40-tonne lorry outside the convention centre with a selection of their forthcoming games housed inside.

Up for consumption this year are: *F-Zero GX, 1080 Avalanche, Pikmin 2, Pac-Man, Four Swords* and, of course, the final version of everyone's Most Wanted game, *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!* Ex-**NGC** team member and current CEO of Nintendo Europe (at least, that's what he told us) Mark 'Greener' Green will be on the lorry too – although we're not too sure how excited we are about that.

Anyway, it's good to see Nintendo making an effort for a change, especially considering that Sony are gearing up for another huge presence at ECTS this year. Nintendo should maybe consider parking their huge lorry in front of the entrance to the Playstation Experience.

As you'd expect, we'll bring you all the info from the event next month...



△ Games off the back of a lorry? Sounds a bit dodgy, but it's perfectly legit.



△ You'll see the final version if you make it into Nintendo's truckload o' fun.



SHORT CUTS



KIRBY'S DAD QUITS NINTENDO
Nintendo and HAL Laboratory Inc producer, Masahiro Sakurai, has decided to call it a day. He was best known for his work on a multitude of excellent *Kirby* games and, of course, *Super Smash Bros Melee*. His reasons for leaving, though, are shrouded in mystery. In a Japanese gaming publication, he openly criticised Nintendo as a company, before admitting that under the current structure he didn't feel comfortable continuing to develop software with them any more.



PORTABLE NES
Now this is bizarre. An Asian manufacturer called 'Mystery' is touting a new handheld called the 'Game Theory Admiral' (not a joke). Apparently the unit will play Japanese NES cartridges, with the possibility of a future upgrade that will let you play UK and US carts too. Operating on three AA batteries, it features a two-inch backlit TFT screen as well as a composite AV cable that allows you to connect it to your television. Hands up all those of you who think it's a Nintendo-endorsed product then…



△ The training area here is quite handy. Or rather, it *would* be if we had any idea what was going on.



△ You get spells by picking up orbs. Part of the fun is experimenting with your team for magic combos.



△ This area is blocked by a swirling vortex. You can only pass with the right water in your urn.

FINAL FANTASY ARRIVES

It's here at last! First impressions on Square's multiplayer masterpiece…

As usual, the best things arrive too late for us to cover them in depth. Square-Enix's *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* landed on our desks (complete with nice packaging and free GBA link-cable) on the morning of our deadline. We'll 'go large' (as it were) on it in next month's issue, but here are our initial impressions.

It's not the most import-friendly game in the world, so a word of warning if you're thinking of picking it up now: after just a couple of minutes you realise that many of the options will require a great deal of trial and error to fully understand their relevance.

Still, once you get into the game proper, the controls are nice and simple, thanks to the fact that you're limited to the GBA's button configuration. In the multi-player – which is the only mode we've investigated so far – you have to traverse different regions, accessed via an overworld map, battling huge numbers of enemies that drop masses of useful items, most notably spells that can be assigned to your character for easy access. Once you've fought your way to the end of a stage you battle a boss before returning to the overworld map.

So far the most impressive thing we've seen is the stunning spell-combo system. If one character casts a spell, other members of your party who cast spells in exactly the same region (indicated by a glowing circle) boost your spell's power and alter its effects. Which, more often than not, causes an eye-watering barrage of special effects.

After a few hours' play, we'd say that this is shaping up to be superb. Be very, *very* excited, folks.





△ Pro Logic II-fuelled *Burnout 2* and *Zelda* sound great via headphones.



△ *Rogue Leader* showcases the new Dolby technology extremely well.

DOLBY GET PERSONAL

The surround sound system that won't get you lynched by your neighbours.



The audio experts from Dolby recently popped into the **NGC** office to show off the very latest in Gamecube-friendly surround sound technology.

The new system is called Dolby Headphone, and it takes 3D sound away from the realm of bulky, expensive, five-speaker setups and into bedrooms, portable devices and personal audio.

By accurately simulating the effect of five channels of sound bouncing and reverberating around different types of room, the system gives proper surround sound through an ordinary set of headphones.

It even takes into account the way sound gets absorbed by furniture in a room, with three different settings depending on the size of room you want to pretend you're sitting in.

It's perfect for playing games with high-quality Pro Logic II soundtracks, such as *Wind Waker* or *Rogue Leader*, and it will also work with your PC, DVD player or anything else that outputs multi-channel sound.

Interestingly, Dolby revealed that the technology is likely to make its way into the next generation of handheld games machines, which should make for some scary Game Boy moments in public places.

Dolby Headphone amps will be available here from next April, and a handful of the more expensive full-size surround sound systems have already incorporated it as standard.

IMPORT CLAMP DOWN
Nintendo's lawyers are once again on the rampage. Seemingly convinced that their threats of legal action against importers are responsible for Pokémon's excellent Euro sales, they're currently doing the same to help sales of Advance Wars 2.

THQ TO PUBLISH RARE GAMES
While Rare have deserted Gamecube, they're all set to bring a selection of titles to GBA. The first game THQ will publish is Banjo-Kazooie: Grunty's Revenge. The perfect tonic for those after a bit of bird-on-bear action.

SONIC



AMY



TAILS



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E-102



BIG



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PREMIERING NOW EXCLUSIVELY ON NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

ANY PORT IN A STORM

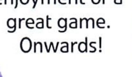
NGC takes a look at how the best third-party games play on 'Cube compared to Those Other Consoles…
Your guide: **Jes Bickham**

Cast your minds back through the mist of memory to the dying days of the N64. We loved the ol' granite block, with its cute solid state technology and mind-blowing roster of all-time classic games, but one thing it did lack was plenty of hot third-party action. Fast forward to now, and lo! See how lucky we are – the humble 'Cube has got *piles* of third-party games. Piles! Things are good, yeah?

But not all these games have been created with Gamecube in mind. Yes, it's brilliant to be able to play *Nightfire* or *Hitman 2* or *Burnout* on Ninty's wonder box, but how do they *really* stack up against the versions of the games available on other formats? Over the next eight pages we'll take a closer look and let you know whether the game is actually best on Gamecube, or whether the developers have created a title that shines on PS2 or Xbox instead. Plainly, there are lots of different criteria involved in this, but we've tried to take everything into account for our final verdicts, from technical issues to control layout, and to be as honest as possible. If something's better on another console, we're not going to lie about it. Conversely, if we think a game's better on Gamecube, it's not because we're a Gamecube-specific magazine and want to diss the other formats, it's because we genuinely believe that the GC version is superior. Whatever the result, the scores we originally gave these games still stand, so don't feel like our Directory is lying to you when you read about what was done to *Splinter Cell* when Ubi Soft squeezed it onto Gamecube…

"YOU CAN'T LOSE OUT IF YOU DECIDE TO BUY ONE OF THESE GAMES – THEY'RE ALL MAGNIFICENT TITLES"

All of that said, you can't really lose out if you decide to buy one of the games we've featured here. They're all magnificent titles, no matter whether one is better or worse on a different format, and the slight differences shouldn't detract from your enjoyment of a great game. Onwards!





BURNOUT 2 POINT OF IMPACT

The fastest game alive (well, the fastest that isn't F-Zero).

GOOD GAME, IS IT?

Goodness gracious, yes – possibly the best arcade-style racer we've ever played. It's quite literally thrilling, a heady concoction of absurd speed, beautifully responsive handling and ridiculous risk-taking. The most authentically painful-looking collisions ever help too – if you make a mistake in *Burnout 2*, you really do know about it, and the excellent Crash mode invites you to make as big a smash as possible in the name of dollar damage. Ouch!

INITIAL CONVERSION IMPRESSIONS?

It's great to look at – clean and detailed and very colourful. And, excuse us if we're being thorough, but the road textures are absolutely gorgeous (*someone needs to get out more – Ed*). It's a very slick game as well, running at a near-constant 60 frames per second. If you're playing through an RGB cable it's a real treat.

BUT HOW DOES IT REALLY STACK UP?

Very well indeed. The game appeared on PS2 a full six months before Gamecube, and developers Criterion took the time to offer a little more with the GC iteration – namely 15 extra Crash junctions (which can also be found on the Xbox version). Graphically, all three versions are much the same – which speaks volumes about how technically masterful Criterion are – with the only real fundamental differences coming down to the joypads. The Gamecube analogue stick is more precise than the others, with Xbox coming in at a close second place (the Xbox controller triggers are best for analogue acceleration, mind). Disappointingly, GC suffers most with multiplayer, offering jerkier action. And ultimately, the Xbox version is plainly where Criterion spent most of their time, as it offers far more than both PS2 and GC. There's custom car 'skins', the ability to create your own soundtrack by ripping music to the Xbox hard drive, and even an online score table feature where you can show off to the world. Close on, this…





△ **We love *Burnout 2* more than our own mothers. No lie there.**

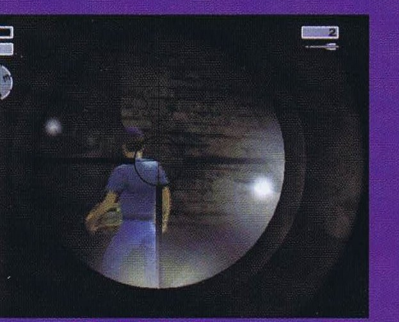
"The GC version handles more precisely than the others."

ANY PORT IN A STORM

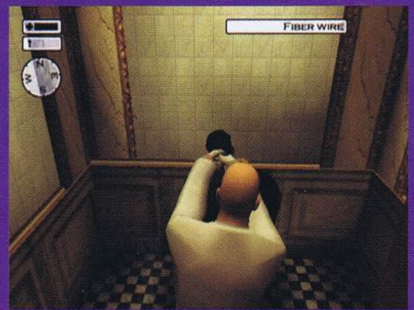
"Fewer buttons to remember = good"

HITMAN 2

Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill. This is Kittsy's favourite game… ever.



△ Sniping the delivery man on the first level, with a crossbow. Life is good. *Yes.*



△ There's no end to the *Hitman* hilarity. We murder a man in the toilets, just 'cos we can.

GOOD GAME, IS IT?

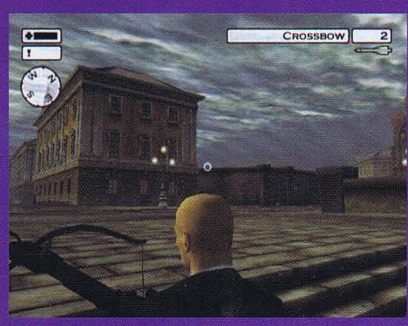
And then some. It's dauntingly, exhilaratingly free-form – you're given a mission and certain tools, and then it's up to you to complete the mission as you see fit. Obviously, as this is an assassin simulation, there's blood and violence, but how much you see of each depends on how you want to carry out the hit. If you like to keep things neat, you can. If you want to wade in gore, do so. A remarkable and misunderstood (not by us, mind) game.



△ For heaven's sake, don't let the cleaning lady escape. She'll raise all kinds of kerfuffle. Tsk, etc.

INITIAL CONVERSION IMPRESSIONS?

Playing through RGB it's sharp, detailed and colourful. There's plenty to learn, control-wise, but it all seems to fit the Gamecube pad well, with only a couple of counter-intuitive commands (cycling through your inventory requires you to hold down B, for instance). It sounds brill, too, with a fully orchestral soundtrack.



△ St. Petersburg. Cold, miserable, and very grey – but nonetheless great for murderising.

BUT HOW DOES IT REALLY STACK UP?

Okay. Graphically, it's probably sharper than Xbox, but there's little to distinguish any of the versions. We really like what developers Io Interactive have done with the control system – fewer buttons on the GC pad means they've been forced to streamline things, which is for the better (fewer buttons to remember = good).

Unfortunately, there's one big drawback here – when there's plenty of action or dead bodies or a move into a large open area, the frame stutters and see-saws. It's not a big problem and doesn't affect the game – but it doesn't happen on PS2 or Xbox. If it weren't for this, we'd say it came down to controller preference.



△ Even disguising yourself as a guard isn't foolproof, hence the little red bar going mental.

"Sharper than the other systems, with more refined handling."



△ No matter what console you're playing on, your opponents are always weird in the extreme.

TIMESPLITTERS 2

The best shooter since Perfect Dark, and then some.

GOOD GAME, IS IT?

Developers Free Radical Design must hate the word *GoldenEye* by now but, as some of them worked on that classic game, it's the point of reference for *TimeSplitters 2*. And while *TS2* is more of a cartoon arcade blast than the Bond title was, it *is* a giant toybox of things to see, do and shoot. Simply magnificent.



△ Get into one o' them fancy gun emplacements and give those stinking aliens what for. Gits.

INITIAL CONVERSION IMPRESSIONS?

This is so polished it's untrue. So smooth it appears to be friction-free, pin-sharp and blessed with colour both subtle and striking, and aurally chunky and satisfying. A real treat.

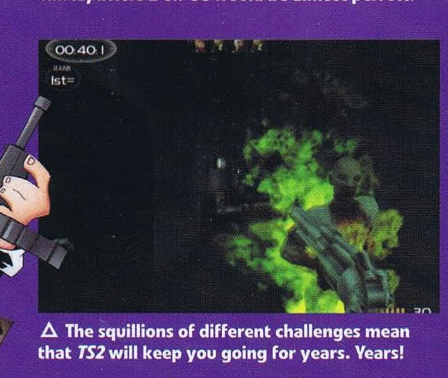


△ If the c-stick weren't so fiddly, then *TimeSplitters 2* on GC would be almost perfect.

BUT HOW DOES IT REALLY STACK UP?

Brilliantly. There are only two issues; one, the Gamecube version is the only one without a system link (ie, network play) option, and two, there's a problem with the Gamecube pad and manual aiming. Using the C-stick to look is just too fiddly – the stick is so small that trying to be precise is frustrating. The larger, more controllable Xbox and PS2 sticks make this far easier.

Of course, with control being 100% customisable in *TS2*, you can always use the analogue stick for aiming, and then it's problem solved – it just means learning a whole new control system. Hmm.

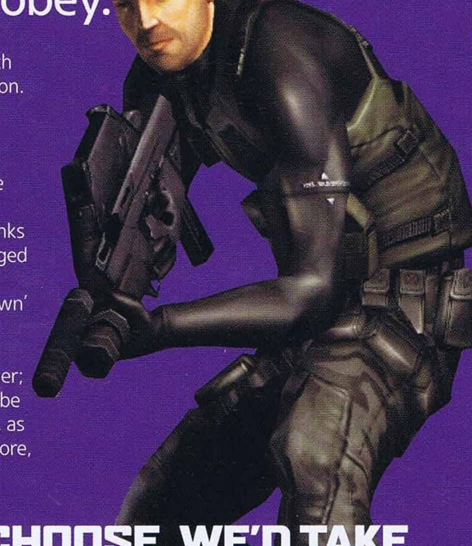


△ The squillions of different challenges mean that *TS2* will keep you going for years. Years!

"A couple of control issues, but looks AMAZING on 'Cube."

SPLINTER CELL

Clancy says "save the world!" We obey.



GOOD GAME, IS IT?
Yipper. It might have its faults (*why* didn't Ubi Soft let you customise the controls? Not allowing you to invert the Y-axis is absurd) but this is a top slice of espionage action, with some excellent application of stealth mechanics, not least being how visible you are. It's not as good as Eidos' *Hitman 2*, but nonetheless remains wholly absorbing.

INITIAL CONVERSION IMPRESSIONS?
Good. While occasionally jerky, the game runs smoothly enough. Control, while never intuitive thanks to the fixed set-up, is at least comprehensive. Graphically it's neat and tidy, if a little grey in places.

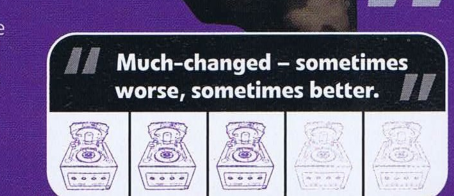
BUT HOW DOES IT REALLY STACK UP?
Hoo-boy. You're in for a shock – *Splinter Cell* is great on Gamecube, but compare it to the Xbox version and there's a *world* of difference. It looks about twice as good there for a start, the shadows being a case in point. Crisp and dynamic on Xbox, they're greyer and flatter on 'Cube. Lighting is also problematic – they've faked it for Nintendo fans, whereas it's actually real-time on Xbox. Ultimately, the game appears to be slightly washed out in comparison but, nonetheless, Gamecube steals a march on the even less impressive PS2 version.

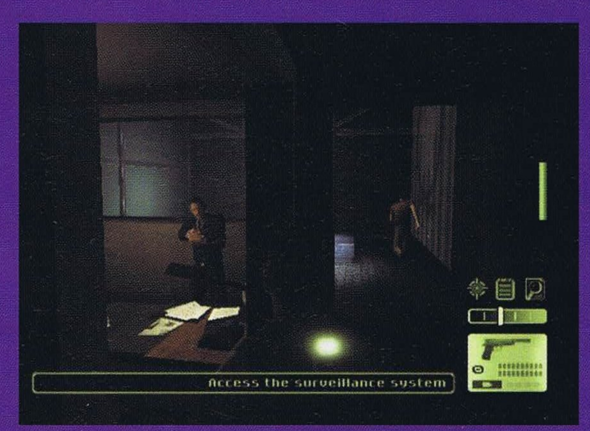
The biggest differences concern content, though. The game has been made easier for PS2 and Gamecube – whereas on Xbox you had to infiltrate the CIA building, on 'Cube you get a keycard – and to this end, whole chunks of in-game levels have been re-arranged (see 'Unwell Cell', right, for further details). AI has also been 'dumbed down' and is now more basic.

It's hard to say that one version, gameplay-wise, is better than the other; in some ways, the more forgiving 'Cube and PS2 versions are more enjoyable, as the Xbox original can get *really* hardcore, but then the Xbox version is more involving. And the re-arranged levels are galling. Finally, though, there's the matter of exclusive content. We get GBA connection action and a new weapon, but PS2 and Xbox owners get exclusive levels. If we had to choose, we'd take more actual game over any link-up shenanigans – so Xbox wins again.

> **"IF WE HAD TO CHOOSE, WE'D TAKE MORE ACTUAL GAME OVER ANY LINK-UP SHENANIGANS"**

"Much-changed – sometimes worse, sometimes better."



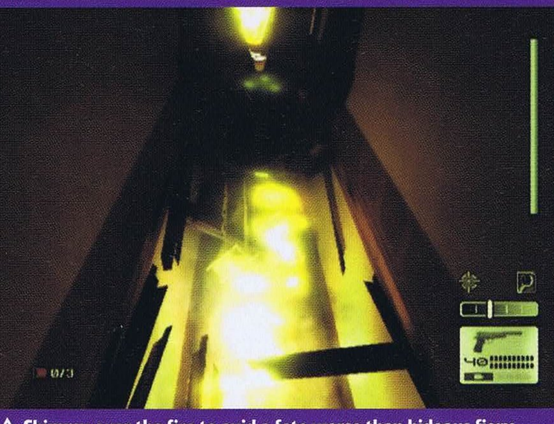


△ Now you've gone and done it. Spooked the civilian and alerted the guard – not a great start to your espionage endeavours. Twot.


△ You're forced to go through the training mission at the start, but it really is useful. Shame you can't customise the controls, though.

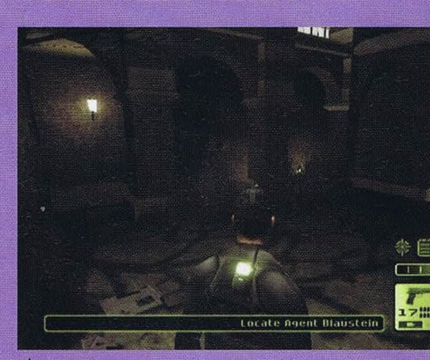


△ Nice lighting here. But unlike the Xbox version, this isn't properly real-time - a shame, that. Still looks the business, though…


△ Shimmy over the fire to avid a fate worse than hideous fiery death. Well, a fate that IS hideous fiery death, at the very least.

UNWELL CELL

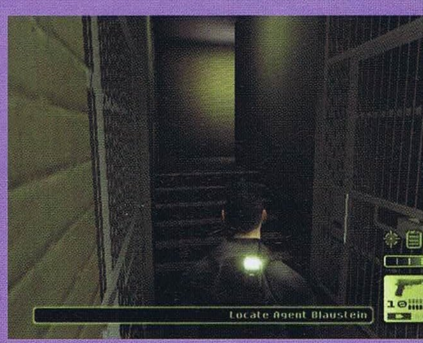
Just look at the differences between Gamecube and Xbox…



△ Playing on Gamecube, infiltrating the police station early on in the game. So far, so good. Looks nice, doesn't it?



△ But the same bit looks better on Microsoft's system, with deeper, sharper shadows and better lighting – it's all so much crisper.



△ Once you get inside, just nobble the guard and then look here, at the end of the hallway. See, there's a blank wall.

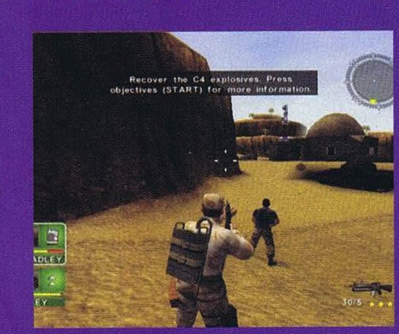

△ On Xbox there's a window so you can see the room behind it. And this is just a minor example of the differences. Ah, well.

CONFLICT DESERT STORM

Morally dubious but brilliantly fun desert-set real-life shooter.

GOOD GAME, IS IT?

At its heart this is a simple shooter, but it comes to brutal, M16-toting life with three friends, as the four-player co-operative mode is capable of generating many entertaining war stories.

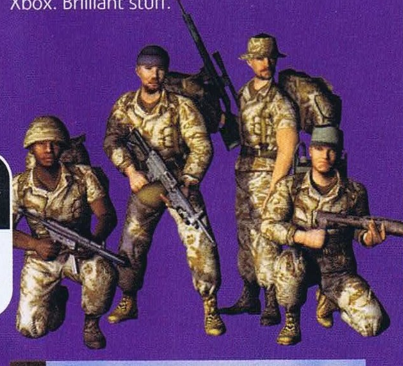


INITIAL CONVERSION IMPRESSIONS?

It was never the most detailed or technically accomplished game – see the fogging – but it's reasonably fluid and clean to behold. Put it next to *TimeSplitters 2* and it pales in comparison, visually, but then just look at it on the other formats…

BUT HOW DOES IT REALLY STACK UP?

Conflict: Desert Storm is the very paragon of conversion etiquette. There's a list as long as your arm concerning the improvements developers Pivotal made to the game, for which they are to be showered in gold and, at the very least, congratulations. It might not be the most dazzling game in the world, graphically, but it's been noticeably bettered over the Xbox and PS2 versions, with fogging pushed back and a more consistent and faster frame-rate (the PS2 version chugs in comparison). The aiming reticule now indicates your accuracy according to distance and stance, there's a better auto-aim, an easier-to-use inventory system, the ability to restart a given level, 'hotkey' shortcuts to equipment, more sensible enemy AI (the PS2 version unforgivably lets enemy troops pinpoint you when you let off a sniper shot) and more. Plenty of little tweaks, basically, that all add up to make playing *CDS* on Gamecube a much fuller and all-round more enjoyable experience than playing it on PS2 (which only has a two-player co-op mode) and Xbox. Brilliant stuff.

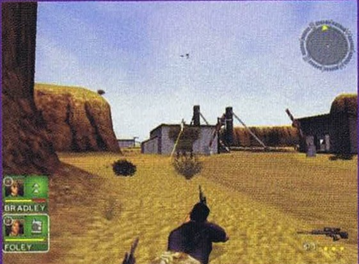


"Fantastic. Improved in every single area over the competition."

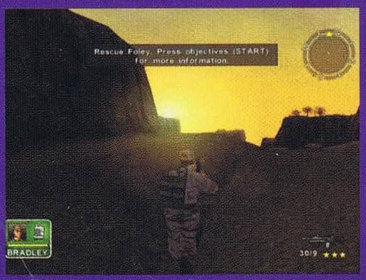
    



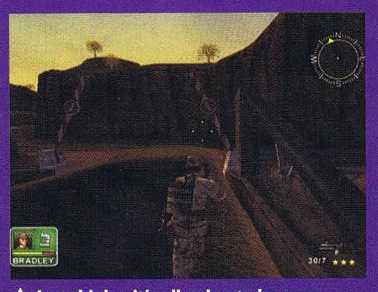
△ Canny developers Pivotal have even taken the time to improve the controls…



△ …In previous versions, sidestepping was wobbly and awkward. No more, though.



△ With three chums, *Conflict Desert Storm* really comes to life. To life, we say! Indeed.



△ Just think – it's all going to be even more improved for the roll-out of *C:DS2*…



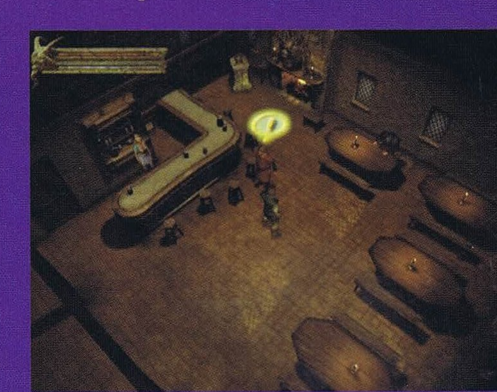
△ Hilariously, stripping your character of clothes and equipment makes you all nudey. Ulp.

BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE

Old-skool kobold bashing, now in the virtual realm. Fancy!

GOOD GAME, IS IT?

Yep, although if you're not a fan of Elves, Dwarfs and Dungeons and Dragons – the third edition rules of which this game is based on – then you might be left cold. But this is an excellent roleplaying romp and the two-player co-op mode is a giant pie-slice of multiplayer goodness.



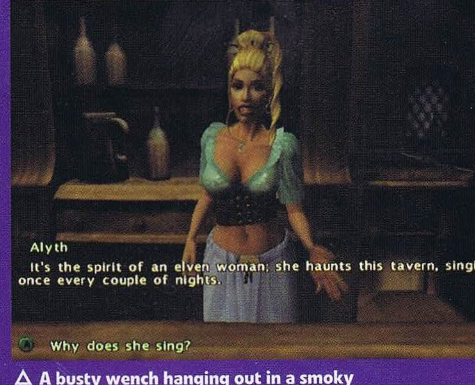
△ If you've ever played 'desktop' Dungeons & Dragons, you'll be in awe of this virtual version.

INITIAL CONVERSION IMPRESSIONS?

The top-down viewpoint initially makes the game seem as if it's lacking in detail, but that's just because the detail is *small*. Graphically, this is incredibly rich. Some of the effects – the rippling water springs immediately to mind – and the beautiful animation bring it to life. No shoddy port here.

BUT HOW DOES IT REALLY STACK UP?

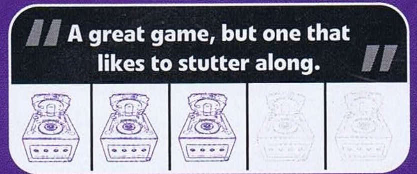
Ah! Put it next to the PS2 and Xbox versions and you'll see that, well, this actually *is* a sloppy port. Sure, it *looks* tremendous, but once again the old 'frame rate problems' raise their ugly head. The game came out on GC a year after on PS2 – why couldn't the developers have taken the time to do a proper job? Disappointing.



△ A busty wench hanging out in a smoky tavern. Soon she'll get drunk and throw up.



"A great game, but one that likes to stutter along."





△ You can choose from any one of a number of absurdly-named characters.

△ Kittsy would sooner chew glass than play *Phantasy Star Online*. Grumpy old munter.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

An online RPG with REAL PEOPLE involved, not just virtual goblins.

GOOD GAME, IS IT?
It's got at least two members of Team **NGC** ensnared in its stat-heavy claws. A fairly straightforward RPG brought blazingly to life by being able to play online with chums, this is both addictive and charming.

INITIAL CONVERSION IMPRESSIONS?
Having already played this on Dreamcast years ago, this really does seem like exactly the same game. A little sharper, perhaps, and offering both Episodes I and II (previously separate packages) plus a four-player splitscreen mode, but nonetheless it's pretty much exactly as we remembered it.

BUT HOW DOES IT REALLY STACK UP?
The Xbox version looks a tiny bit better, but this being a years-old game, it's not really the visuals that are important for *PSO*. Nope, that comes down to other things, and while Xbox lacks the downloadable treats that the Gamecube version gets (such as being able to play *NiGHTS* on your GBA), whether you prefer talking or typing will ultimately decide the format for you.

Currently, the brilliant ASCII pad/keyboard combo isn't available in the UK, meaning that for Gamecube you'll either have to use the software keyboard (inconvenient) or Datel's crappy Powerboard (just plain crappy). Plus, while the effort of typing means only pertinent information tends to come across, and things remain much more civilised, tapping away can be a royal pain in the fundament. So being able to talk to other players over Xbox Live is simply better. Sure, you get morons being idiots, and idiots being morons, but that's the risk you run.

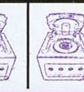
Finally, there's the cost involved. Your Hunter's License is £6 a month, but if you're going with Microsoft there's Xbox Live subscription fees on top of that (and remember, you can only play Xbox Live over broadband). So, do you prefer to use a keyboard, downloadable content and relative cheapness or a bit more money to pay and the convenience of speech? That's the choice with the two current versions of *PSO*, and frankly, it's an incredibly close call to make…





△ Playing the game offline and on your own can be downright boring, annoyingly.

"Better than on DC, and the downloadable stuff's great."


THIRD UP

With close to 200 games available on the 'Cube, we run down the most notable others, third-party wise…



Skies of Arcadia Legends
Resurrected from the ashes of Dreamcast, this is pretty much the same game as before, simply wedged onto a smaller disc and stuffed into Gamecube. No special features here.



SSX Tricky
A brilliant game and no mistake, but this suffers from Sloppy Port Syndrome, as it's riddled with slowdown and frame rate judders. These aren't enough to spoil the game, though.



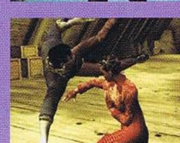
Crazy Taxi
Emulated rather than ported, this also suffers from a fluctuating frame rate. Stick with the Dreamcast version, if you've got it. If you haven't, er… you'll have to get this.



Hulk
Visually, all versions are much of a muchness, and they all perform similarly. The Gamecube game loads much quicker than the PS2 version, though…



James Bond 007: Nightfire
A splendid Gamecube conversion, although the game shines on all formats. Sixty frames per second, colourful and solid, this may not be a patch on *GoldenEye* but it's technically a stunner.



Enter The Matrix
It might come on two discs (!) but the Gamecube version is more refined than the muddy PS2 version. Xbox wins, though, with proper widescreen support and better surround sound.



Star Wars: Clone Wars
The 'Cube version's the smoothest, but the Xbox iteration caters for system link play and online shenanigans. This'd be more important if the multiplayer mode was Any Good.



Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc
Victory for the 'Cube! The Xbox version both looks and sounds better but the remarkable GBA connection bonuses make for a much more impressive package on Gamecube.



The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers
The movie clips here are compressed and therefore of a lower quality than on PS2 and Xbox, but otherwise the Cube version is cleaner and crisper in all respects.



Sonic Adventure DX
Just dreadful – glitchy and horribly choppy. The Game Gear bonuses can't even begin to excuse a port that is technically an order of magnitude behind the Dreamcast original.

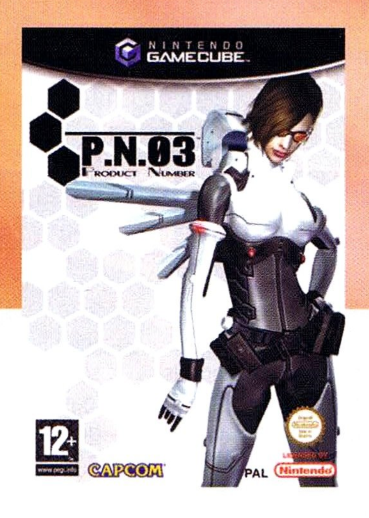


Batman Dark Tomorrow
Hahahahahahaha! Etc.


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Exquisite Execution

"Stylish and addictive. A cracking shooter." Cube Magazine





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REVIEWS



F-ZERO GX

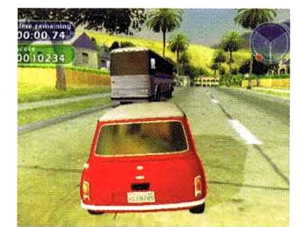
Fed up of slow racers, glitchy racers, racers whose frame rate can't stand the pace? Get ready to open the windows and turn the alarm off, because *F-Zero GX* is so fast, it *smokes*. P66

WARNING! SPOILERS AHOY! OUR REVIEWS CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFO!



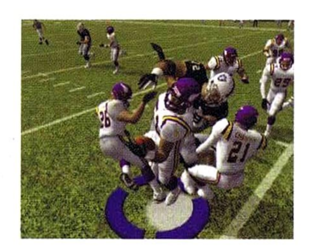
KIRBY'S AIR RIDE

We've waited ages for a really good Kirby game – the poor blob doesn't seem to have found his niche. Perhaps this is the vehicle he needs… P74



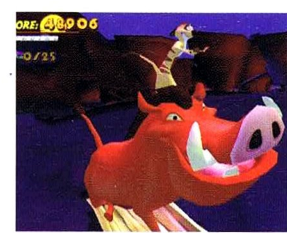
THE ITALIAN JOB

Forget the quotable lines, 'cos this is the game of the film remake. So, it's all set in modern-day LA. At least the minis are still going strong. P60



MADDEN NFL 2004

You only *think* you hate American football – the latest in the *Madden* series will show you it's actually engrossing. Go on, try it. P59



DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE

Disney are here to prove that mice can skate – as, indeed, can cartoon warthogs. P62

PLUS

GBA REVIEWS

Evil pitchfork-wielding hamster sets out to ruin romance! Yes, you did read that right… P64

DROME RACERS

Lego racing. Oh, the joy! P63

NHL 2004

Another pucking sports sim. P58

GT CUBE

Racing. That's it, really. P76

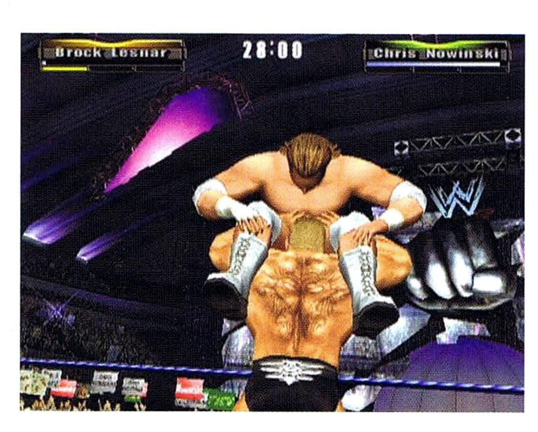
HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. We don't rest until we've played a game enough to pinpoint ALL of its strengths and weaknesses, and be able to deliver the most honest, no-nonsense verdicts around.



MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR

If you played N64 *Mario Golf*, you'll know what to expect – lots of engaging, swing-a-minute fun. But does it come close to par-fect? P72



WWE WRESTLEMANIA XIX

Grrrrrr... <*slap-slap*> GaaaaaHHHH!... <*twwwwoooong*> Mmmaaaaaaarrgh! <*schreeet*> Gunph! GRAAAHHH! P54

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24

Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.

25-49

Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74

Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89

Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+

NGC STAR GAME

Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence...

THE SCORE BAR

The verdict explained for you...

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some plus and minus points.



+
- Nice moves.
- Yeah, *reeeal* nice.
- You smell of hot, sweet tea, you know.

–
- Sometimes you look... tired.
- Like a herd of jogging cows.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
It's All Odd
Stopitsoft
NGC/999999, 22%
Little Link. Leeeetle Link. Sounds funny when you say it enough. Link. Liiiiink. Linkk.



VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure...

1 VISUALS
I can see you. Yes, from up here. You look... perdy.

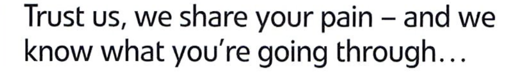
1 SOUNDS
Sssh... listen to the voices. Can you hear them? Sssh...

1 MASTERY
Ah, yes. Really pushes. Reeaally p-p-p-pushes. It.

1 LIFESPAN
I'm going to live forever – just you watch me, maaan...

VERDICT

We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.

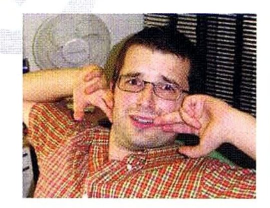


VERDICT
Lack of sleep does funny things to a man's body and brain. It gobs them up and causes them to clatter.

NGC 96

MEET THE NGC TEAM

Trust us, we share your pain – and we know what you're going through...



MARCUS
Can you hear the voices? No. You can't. Because they're only in Hawkins' slim head, teasing him for all eternity with promises of butter.



PAUL
Yes... it was a poodle. A filthy great... small poodle. And it was his own. His own! Serves him right for having a schnozz like a chipolata.



KITTSY
You don't have to smile all the time, according to Martin. Enjoy the pain – taste it if you have to – just wipe that upturned hole off yer face.



GRRRAINT
The face says it all. Well, the mouth does at least. The pain of having to endure another day listening to Edwards sense talking. Sweet cheese.



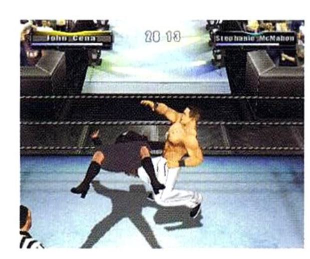
MIM
Mysterious and spooky, and all together ooky, new girl Mim's had it up to here with Cenobites. Apparently they leave the place in a right state.



PAUL MK.II
Frozen in time, pushed off a cliff, shattered into small fragments and glued back together by dugongs. Paul's ambitions are simple.

"More detailed and lifelike than ever before"





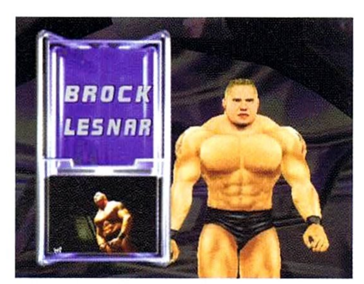




Δ Anyone who's played ***Def Jam Vendetta*** will find the old 'pin his arms back while your mate slaps him around' move eerily familiar. In fact, there are loads more double team moves than in previous WWE games.



Δ Poor old John Cena, lumbered with that embarrassing Vanilla Ice gimmick.



Δ For Lesnar's model, they seem to have just piled on the muscle. Fair play.



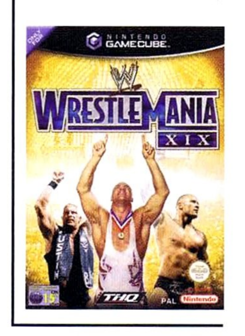
Δ In Royal Rumble matches, throw opponents over the top ropes to win.



Δ Our man sets Bubba Ray Dudley up for a Baldo Bomb. It's going to hurt.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	THQ
DEVELOPER	YUKES
RELEASE DATE	16 SEPT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	20
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



WWE WRESTLEMANIA XIX

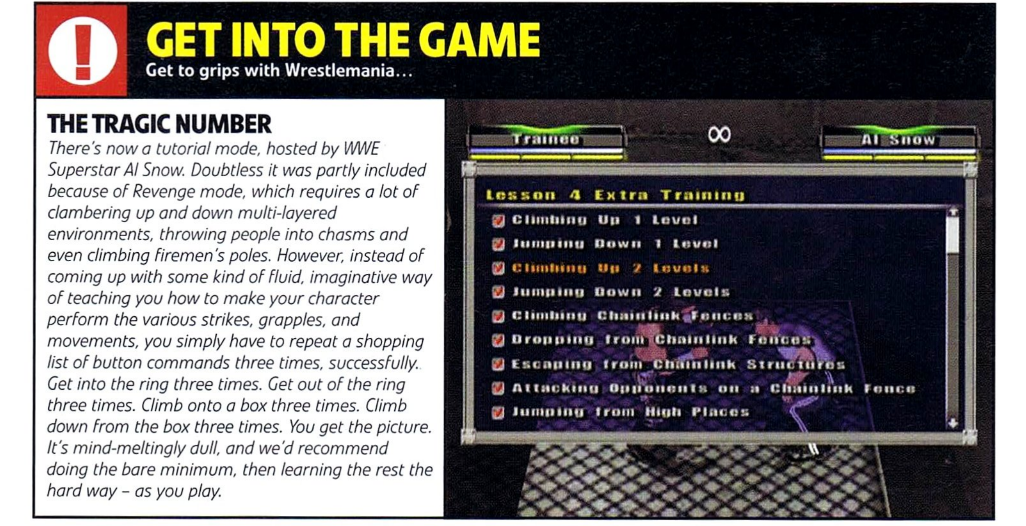
Time to dust off those sparkly pink pants and fetch the baby oil – grown men are about to get physical…

GET INTO THE GAME

Get to grips with Wrestlemania…

THE TRAGIC NUMBER

There's now a tutorial mode, hosted by WWE Superstar Al Snow. Doubtless it was partly included because of Revenge mode, which requires a lot of clambering up and down multi-layered environments, throwing people into chasms and even climbing firemen's poles. However, instead of coming up with some kind of fluid, imaginative way of teaching you how to make your character perform the various strikes, grapples, and movements, you simply have to repeat a shopping list of button commands three times, successfully. Get into the ring three times. Get out of the ring three times. Climb onto a box three times. Climb down from the box three times. You get the picture. It's mind-meltingly dull, and we'd recommend doing the bare minimum, then learning the rest the hard way – as you play.





Since the WWE is the biggest professional wrestling organisation in the world, and since Wrestlemania is its biggest show of the year, you could reasonably expect the videogame of said muscular extravaganza to be equally lavish and hard-hitting. We had high hopes for this game as, at last, a limb-specific damage system, more advanced grapple engine and re-imagined story mode were planned.

As a straight wrestling game, *Wrestlemania XIX* has certainly improved upon its predecessors. The superstars all have their own relatively current entrances, signature moves, and are more detailed and lifelike than ever before. Matches are quick and fluid, and the counter/reversal system takes some of the guesswork out of

WOOOOOOOOOOO!

Pressing A + B together with at least one yellow bar gets you pumped up.

FINISHING SCHOOL

Different grapplers have different finishing moves depending on context – they can be submissions, aerial leaps, or just big ol' power moves

WHINES AND SPIRITS

Your opponent may well bitch about it, but that shouldn't stop you performing as great a variety of moves as possible on him/her to boost your spirit.

ONE... TWO...

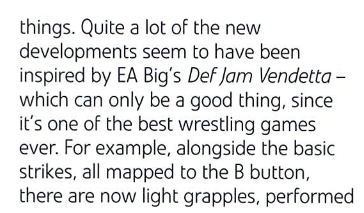
That crucial third count is the one that will win you the match – normal matches, at least. Plenty of moves automatically end in a pin, which is actually more often annoying than useful.

SPIRITED!

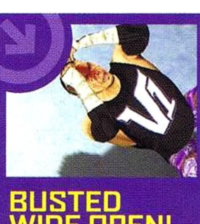
After warming your opponent up with some slaps and light grapples, keep the pressure on with some heavy grapples until your spirit meter (yes, spirit meter) is full, and you can power up. You've got 10 seconds, so use them well.

things. Quite a lot of the new developments seem to have been inspired by EA Big's *Def Jam Vendetta* – which can only be a good thing, since it's one of the best wrestling games ever. For example, alongside the basic strikes, all mapped to the B button, there are now light grapples, performed by tapping A and any direction (or leaving it neutral). These are one-hit moves and don't involve actually tying up with the opponent, unlike the heavy grapples, executed by holding down A. From this position, pressing any direction and B performs a strike, and any direction and A performs a more powerful grapple. Y is essentially responsible for movement – running, getting in and out of the ring, climbing a turnbuckle – and X picks up weapons.

So far, so good. Defensively, there's been a shift, too. To help you time your grapple escapes and strike blocks, the L or R trigger icon (according to which you need to hit) will flash briefly over your head. Pressing both together reverses special moves. Owing to the nature of the pad's triggers, and the fact you have to not only depress them but click them home too, the counters and reversals still take plenty of practice and a bit of luck to get down pat.



"ALONGSIDE THE BASIC STRIKES, ALL MAPPED TO THE B BUTTON, THERE ARE NOW LIGHT GRAPPLES"



BUSTED WIDE OPEN!

The WWE notoriously don't like their wrestlers leaking too much. Come back ECW, we miss you… Although now, of course, the WWE have caved to the bloodthirsty gameplaying public, and sufficiently vicious blows to the face prompt an anguished mini cut-scene and appropriate ooze…

BLOOD PRESSURE

After extensive playtesting though, we have picked up on a couple of oddities.

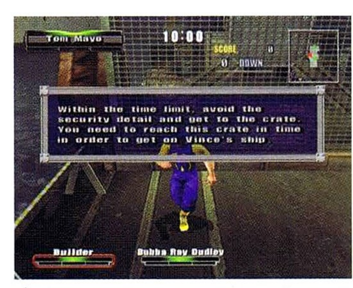
We were, for example, able to climb up the sides of a table but not the ends. Most bizarre. Most disappointing of all, we couldn't access any special context-sensitive moves when we had our foe slumped against a table/ladder in the corner. How very queer.

One big bonus, however, is the inclusion of blood. Oh yes indeedy, one chair shot too many and the old crimson mask makes an appearance. Special moves are also handled differently – as you fight, a bar slowly fills. Once it's at maximum, you get the first of three smaller yellow bars, and it

DID YOU KNOW? There are over 40 real-life wrestlers in the game, including The Rock and Hulk Hogan.



It was inevitable, really, that we would choose the four sexiest divas and make them, you know, touch each other.



To get to the crate, you'll need to climb a pole. This is nigh-on impossible.



No, no and, for the love of Torrie, thrice we say no! Blasted Revenge…



All the wrestlers have handy profiles for the benefit of the uninitiated.

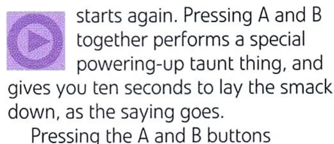


Taking a break from filming his latest action adventure, it's the housewife's choice! Complete with new tattoo and entrance and all.



There are all kinds of rude jokes to make about this picture, but we won't. We're all adults here, and wrestling isn't camp. Well… not much.


It always looks like a doddle to escape. But then we've never had to.



starts again. Pressing A and B together performs a special powering-up taunt thing, and gives you ten seconds to lay the smack down, as the saying goes.

Pressing the A and B buttons together again in most positions and situations – forward lock up, back lock up, grounded opponent, on the turnbuckle and so on – will perform some kind of signature move. Instead of just two, you have up to eight different finishers, in effect.

The Exhibition mode at least feels finished, and is pretty impressive to boot, but it's the story mode – Revenge – where it seems to all go terribly, terribly odd.

STORY BORED…

No WWE game has had anything like a decent story mode. Again, *Def Jam Vendetta* managed it beautifully, but it was strictly delineated, and not as free-flowing as perhaps we'd like.

This time around, the story is this – Vince McMahon has kicked you out of the WWE and, with the help of Stephanie, you decide to wreak revenge and try to make sure Wrestlemania never happens.

There are 25 missions spread across four locations, and it's all a bit 'adventure game'.

You wander around a parking garage/construction site/shopping mall/harbour beating up security guards and workmen (all of whom seem to have rather polished wrestling skills), and attempting to fulfil ever more demanding mission criteria. Boss characters – sometimes WWE superstars but later special new folk – appear with gradually greater frequency, and… well… the story mode's *not very good*.

RING NUTS

The difficulty curve is more like a spiral of insanity, and there's far too much emphasis on moving your wrestler around an environment that he isn't designed for.

You can't even really run around, for heaven's sake – your point of reference is always the nearest targeted enemy, and you can only peg it in straight lines. Climbing poles? Climbing wire fences? It's basically the most annoying bit of previous titles (those aggravating cage matches, where the other guy never stays down long enough for you to actually climb out of the damn thing), only more so.

And without a ring or turnbuckle in sight (for some reason, standing on a

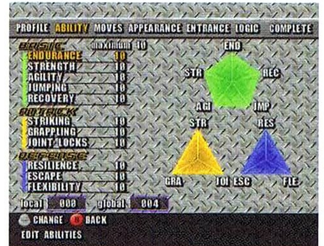


KING OF THE RING

Other than straight Exhibition mode, where you can choose from the usual suspects of Hardcore, TLC and the like, you can enter the King of the Ring tournament, which lasts several rounds, elimination-style. Brock Lesnar is the man to beat, but we found him surprisingly easy. Perhaps because all our stats were 10/10.

MAKE YOU A MAN

In just one day you'll be beefier than a herd of Fresians…



MAX PAIN

10/10 in every stat, with points and cash to spare. In about a day. It would be much more annoying if it made more difference to the game, but it doesn't.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Newly created wrestlers can be allocated up to eight special attacks, dependant on context and positioning. Too much of a good thing? We'd say so, yeah.

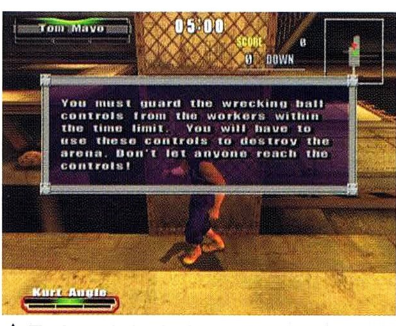


OL' YELLOW EYES

Ooh, isn't he scary! As anticipated, the level of detail is impressive – not that you get to see his face terribly often in a match. Now, where's the clown nose..?

SIZE MATTERS

No longer can you create a midget wrestler and powerbomb Big Show for a giggle. Comparative heights/weights are now taken into account, interestingly.



△ **The last mission in the construction site, which is loosely based around Royal Rumble matches.**



△ **Only after finishing the regular 24 missions will you be able to attempt the XIX arena…**



△ **Lesnar's pyro in full effect – the arenas are detailed and the crowd chants and roars encouragingly, even if they are still resolutely made of badly digitised, animated sheets of cardboard. Moon on a stick? Yes *please*.**

higher level than your target doesn't seem to allow you to use a high flying move), several weapons in your arsenal have simply been taken away. If any of your moves end in a pin, you're essentially screwed.

There are no refs in the docks, and sitting there trying to cover some hard hat-wearing worker is just going to get your head stoved in by his friend. It's ambitious, sure, but inappropriate. And, unless some fine-tuning's done at the eleventh hour, a terrible mistake.

> **"TRYING TO COVER SOME HARD HAT-WEARING WORKER IS JUST GOING TO GET YOUR HEAD STOVED IN BY HIS FRIEND"**

The Create A Wrestler mode is, as expected, even more stupidly detailed than ever, with potentially endless combinations of facial wrinkles and different-coloured socks.

What alarmed us slightly was the lack of actual parts to play with – fewer moves, less clothing. You can earn money from the Revenge mode, and spend it at the Stacy Keibler-hosted Shopzone for new move sets, entrance animations, weapons and so on, but her wares were curiously limited. Your wrestler also has a number of stats, ranked out of ten, which start off rock bottom, but points too can be bought from Stacy with cash. Too easily, as it turns out. After an afternoon of playing, our creation Blue Lightning was rated a solid 10/10 across the board. What's the point of that?

What we're left with is a slightly worried, but tentatively optimistic feeling. The interface is clumsy, but it has always been awful. The story mode is diabolical, but salvagable – just. If all the things we feel we have a right to expect are added by the time the boxed game hits the shops, it could be the best WWE game yet. We want more moves than any other WWE game. More CAW parts. A story mode that actually has some semblance of balance and playability. That would be nice.

Until then, Yuke's will have to put up with the score opposite…

TOM MAYO



SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

Stacy Keibler gladly offering you her wares must have been high on the wish list of a lot of fans. Your dreams have now come true! Kind of. She hosts Shopzone, where you can buy everything from new moves and Superstars' movesets to ability points, new entrance effects and weapons. Sadly, you can only earn money in Revenge.



- Realistic wrestlers.
- Improved grappling system.
- Gore!

−

- Unimaginative tutorial session.
- Misconceived story mode.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Def Jam Vendetta
Majesco
NGC/82 87%
No CAW mode and shaky tag team action, but everything else is tops.





9 VISUALS

The wrestlers move and look just like the real thing.

7 SOUNDS

No commentary, but some decent sound effects.

8 MASTERY

Uses the hardware well – the game itself is the problem.

6 LIFESPAN

Very very difficult to say how long it'll last, on this evidence.

VERDICT

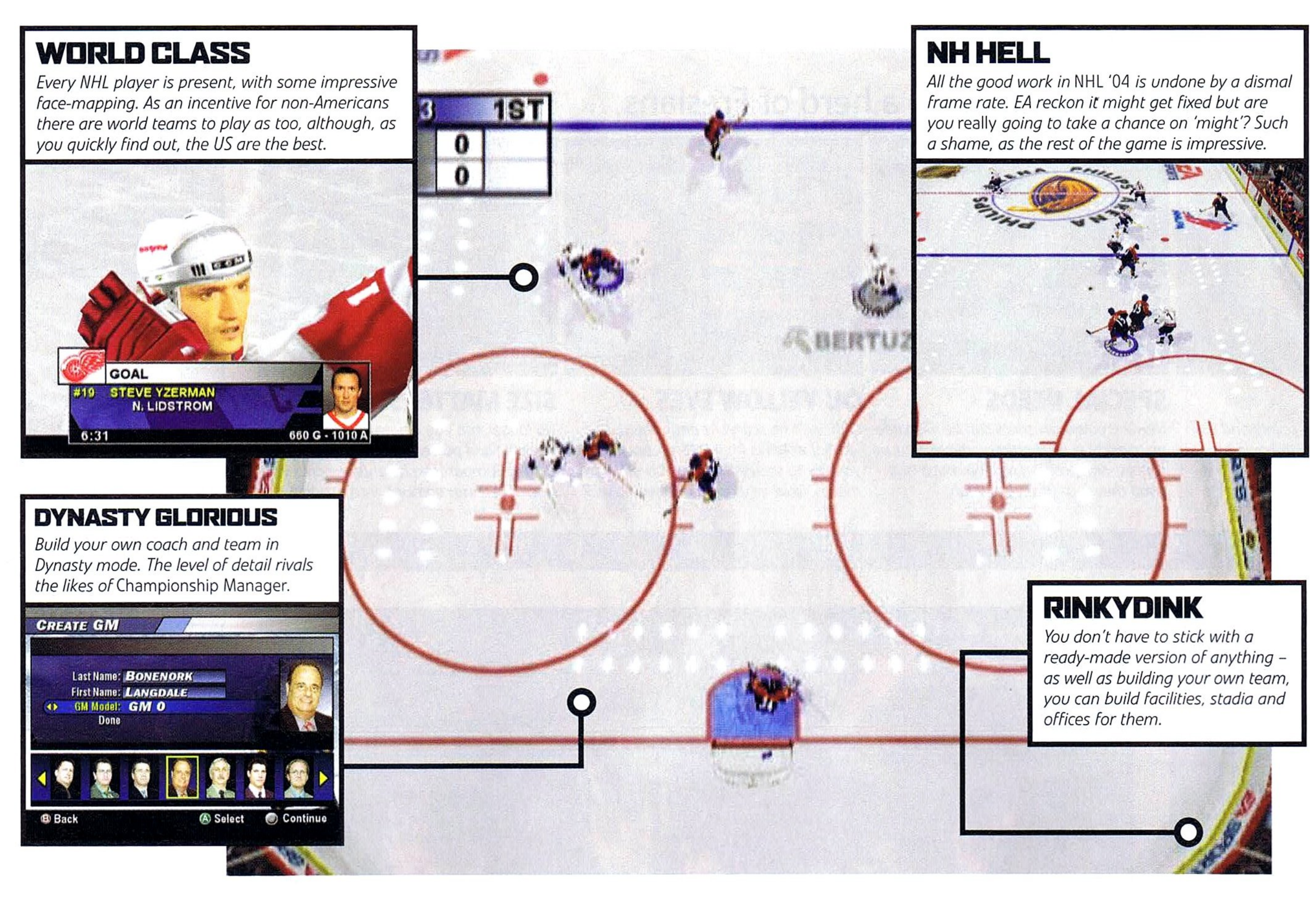
We really, really hope that things like the limited CAW parts and the aggravating story mode get tweaked. As it stands, this is a missed opportunity.





DID YOU KNOW? In MTV America's WWE Tough Enough, the contestants aim to become pro wrestlers. If only Simon Cowell were a judge on that one…

"It's hard to describe how jerky it feels"

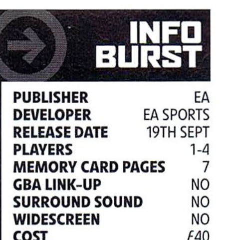


WORLD CLASS
Every NHL player is present, with some impressive face-mapping. As an incentive for non-Americans there are world teams to play as too, although, as you quickly find out, the US are the best.

NH HELL
All the good work in NHL '04 is undone by a dismal frame rate. EA reckon it might get fixed but are you really going to take a chance on 'might'? Such a shame, as the rest of the game is impressive.

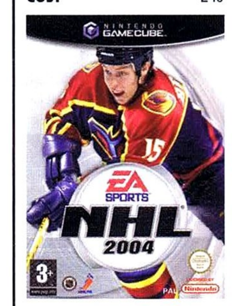
DYNASTY GLORIOUS
Build your own coach and team in Dynasty mode. The level of detail rivals the likes of Championship Manager.

RINKYDINK
You don't have to stick with a ready-made version of anything – as well as building your own team, you can build facilities, stadia and offices for them.



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA SPORTS
RELEASE DATE	19TH SEPT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	7
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



NHL 2004

It's the biggest leap an NHL game has ever taken. A leap backwards, thanks to some 'technical' woes.



This could have been the greatest NHL game yet. Unfortunately, someone at EA Sports overlooked the game's hideous frame rate problems, which spoil every piece of good work done back in the locker room.

We should point out that we quizzed EA on the subject of the aforementioned technical issues, and they told us the Gamecube version had a lower frame rate than the PS2 one. Er, right. But also that they had no real way of knowing what the final build would be like until it got to their submission department. Er, right. So, it might change for the final version or it might not. Our gut feeling (based on years of reviewing pre-submission code, like every other magazine) is that it won't change, so until we hear otherwise, we're assuming the frame rate will be shot.

Which means *NHL '04* is difficult to recommend. You can zip around the snazzy menu system and dip into the warm waters of the Dynasty mode, but at the end of the day, it's the rink-based sections of the game that you pay for – and, in its current guise, you'll be going back to the shop for a £40 refund.

> **"THE ACTION LEAPS AROUND LIKE A BADLY-EDITED FILM – AT POINTS IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S RUNNING AT ABOUT 20FPS"**

From the off, the action leaps around like a badly edited film, dropping frames, dropping animation – at points it looks like it's running at about 20fps. It's hard to describe how jerky it feels. It's especially surprising to see an EA Sports game looking like this; normally they're the epitome of slick design.

It's a real shame because, in terms of behind-the-scenes additions, this is the



strongest NHL package for a long time, perhaps ever. It's hard to underline just how impressive Dynasty mode is, for example, being able to build better facilities for your team, hiring better coaches and even ploughing money into a new office for yourself. And that's just the start.

But on the ice is where this counts, and while you can *see* the improvements – easier and more aggressive fighting for one – you just can't face spending any time trying it out. Difficult to play, then, and impossible to recommend.

TIM WEAVER



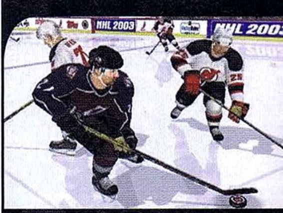
- Dynasty mode is brilliant.
- More violence.
- Better commentary.



- Bad frame rate…
- plus slowdown…
- …equals gameplay problems.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
NHL '03
EA Sports
NGC/65 64%
Not as comprehensive out back, but up front the number one hockey sim.



7 VISUALS
Hard to see the detail from the default camera. Zoom in…

6 SOUNDS
Better commentary than last year, but still needs work.

2 MASTERY
Probably the worst frame rate problems we've ever seen.

5 LIFESPAN
it's big, but would you have the stomach to continue?

VERDICT
Technical problems mar what could have been the best ice hockey game yet. The drawing board should see some action.



NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

57

DID YOU KNOW? Ice hockey didn't actually evolve from field hockey, but from the Irish sport of hurley.

Can American football games get any bigger? Oh yes…

△ Playmaker mode is a new thing. Use the C-stick to activate new subtleties.

△ You'll see some great animations in the post-play cut-scene window.

△ A punishing training regime can improve the stats of your players.

△ Extort money from Americans by doubling the price of foam fingers.

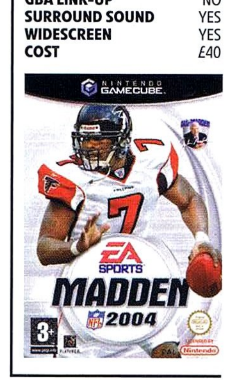
△ One saved game, a franchise season, two user profiles and the game settings equal 275 memory card pages! And it can go higher.

MADDEN NFL 2004

Fourth and inches… The world's number one American football game is poised for glory.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	TIBURON
RELEASE DATE	12TH SEPT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM CARD PAGES	2-LOTS!
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



Arriving just a week after the NFL season kicks off, this is the American football game that more than makes up for the lack of live action on terrestrial TV.

While games such as *Quarterback Club* and *NFL 2K* have occasionally emerged from the pack to challenge EA's licensed juggernaut, the *Madden* series has been the most consistent benchmark in gridiron games over the past decade-and-a-bit.

This year, as with all EA Sports titles, the new additions are helpfully marked with a bright red *New!* icon, just in case you thought you'd accidentally loaded up the 2003 version.

And the main update is a big one. Owner mode allows you to micro-manage the finances of your club (or 'franchise' as it is in the US), rather like a stripped-down version of *Theme Park*. You can build a stadium to your own specifications, gluing on as many executive boxes as you like, and increase ticket prices to make sure you attract the right sort of fans. It's even possible to tweak the price of hot dogs and burgers, because every penny counts when your star quarterback is on a $40m salary.

COACH TRIP

Away from the accountant's office, *Madden 2004* plays a typically strong game. Until you've mastered the controls and playbook, scoring is far easier than defending, which should help it appeal to the gridiron-curious, as well as old hands.

For those who want to delve deeper there's an incredibly comprehensive training mode in which former coach John Madden talks you through some of the basics, and explains exactly what you're supposed to do on certain plays. If you don't know the difference between I-Form and Shotgun, or what on earth a cornerback is for, a couple of hours spent here will clear it all up.

It will take a keen follower of the game to spot any really significant changes once you're down on the playing field, but the improvements to the Owner mode make it a worthy purchase for committed fans.

For everyone else, if you've ever had your fingers burned by an American football game that's too difficult to learn or too dumb to put up much of a fight, *Madden 2004* is an excellent entry point to a fascinating sport, as well as a lasting challenge. Take a punt, and you may well be touched. Down.

MARTIN KITTS



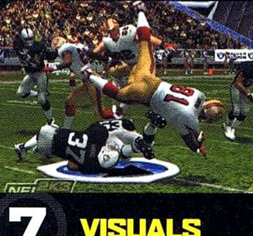
- It's enormous.
- Good animations.
- Management and owner options.



- Heavily biased towards attack.
- Eats memory card pages for breakfast.



NFL 2K3
Sega
NGC/79 86%
Serious American football action in an update of the great Dreamcast series.



7 VISUALS
Widescreen mode gives a great view of the field.

8 SOUNDS
Massive amount of commentary and spoken information.

7 MASTERY
New modes combine NFL with *Theme Park*. Very clever.

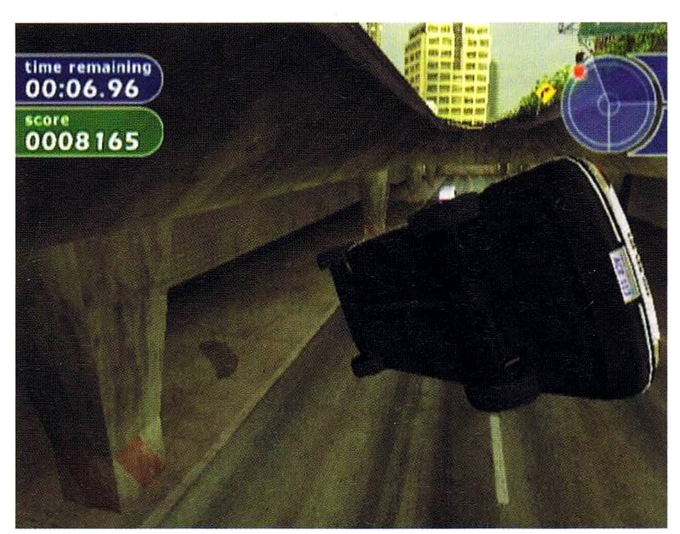
9 LIFESPAN
No online mode, but a franchise season can take months to play.

VERDICT
Great stuff. Newbies and veterans alike will find it a satisfying and user-friendly version of this most technical of sports.

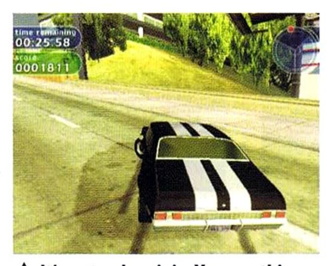


87

"The best chance you've ever had of finishing a game"



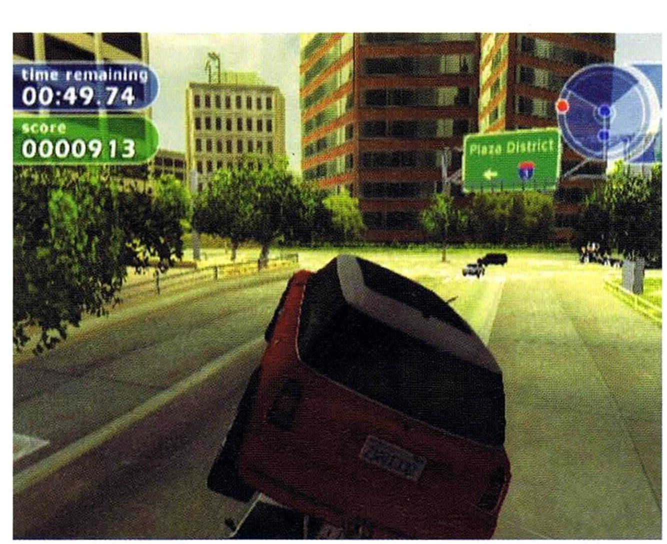
△ As befits a game based on a Hollywood film, the stunts can be spectacular – but if you can't handle the landing, they can cost you dearly too.



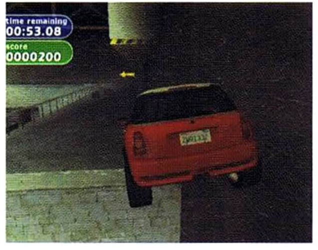
△ It's not only minis. You use this beaut to pick up a surveillance van.



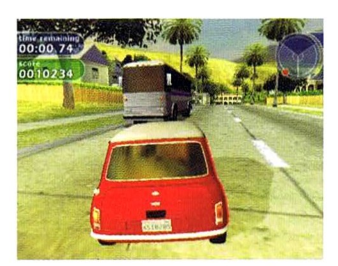
△ If you're 'crazy', you can negotiate steps and back alleys.



△ Woooooah! Send your Mini soaring skywards using conveniently placed vehicle-carrying lorries. This is as exciting as things get, mind you.



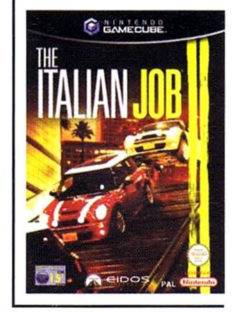
△ Stunt mode ends up as a speed around a course with tiny ledges.



△ The city looks decent, but it's small and notably lacking in secrets.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EIDOS
DEVELOPER	CLIMAX
RELEASE DATE	12TH SEPT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



THE ITALIAN JOB LA HEIST

It's got minis. And it's *really* mini.

△ In certain missions, the cops hunt you.

Let's not beat around the bush: this has to have the world's shortest single-player mode. If you're absolutely appalling at games, *The Italian Job* probably represents the best chance you've ever had of finishing a game. If, on the other hand, you're the sort of person who finished *Metroid Prime* in a couple of days, this'll play like a training level.

Burnout this ain't. Or *Driver*. Or even *Crazy Taxi*. Or, in fact, any racing game worth its salt that you could name. It's a repetitive mission-based driving 'experience' with a virtual representation of LA that seems to be about ten blocks by ten blocks.

It's A-to-B racing with a timer for company and the occasional police chase. And that's pretty much it. There are some stunts chucked in – carefully-placed lorries that you can use as ramps; a short stretch of disused freeway and a neat handbrake turn that swivels you 90º and that, when mastered, will ensure you complete the game even more quickly – but otherwise this is painfully bereft of challenge and, significantly, painfully bereft of excitement.

> IT'S A-TO-B RACING WITH A TIMER FOR COMPANY AND THE OCCASIONAL POLICE CHASE

ESCAPE FROM LA

One problem is that it's incredibly primitive. Despite all the good work coders Climax have done on the handling and the stunts, CPU traffic behaves entirely robotically, to the point where, on restarting a level again, you can just weave in and out of other cars because they always stick to a rigid 'one on the left, one on the right' policy. Another niggle is that the mission destination points are often the same so, when you get to know the city well (not hard considering its relatively small size), you just ignore any details and head for the place you always head for, thereby shaving whole minutes off completion time. In a game of already limited scope and difficulty, it's just another nail in its Mini-shaped coffin.

Truth is, the most frustrating thing about *The Italian Job* isn't so much that it doesn't come up to scratch, but that underneath the hood is a decent blueprint for a Gamecube racing title…

TIM WEAVER





- Good handling, handbrake turns.
- Fast, smooth, free-flowing action.

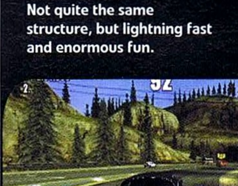


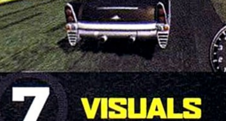
- Over in four hours.
- Tedious missions.
- Tiny city maps.
- Repetitive goals.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Burnout 2
Acclaim
NGC/80 90%
Not quite the same structure, but lightning fast and enormous fun.





7 VISUALS
A good-looking city, with slopes, jumps and sharp corners.



6 SOUNDS
The soundtrack's good, but it's played over and over again.



6 MASTERY
Quick and smooth, though we're not talking *GTA*.

2 LIFESPAN
Over in an evening, leaving only Time Trial and Stunt mode.

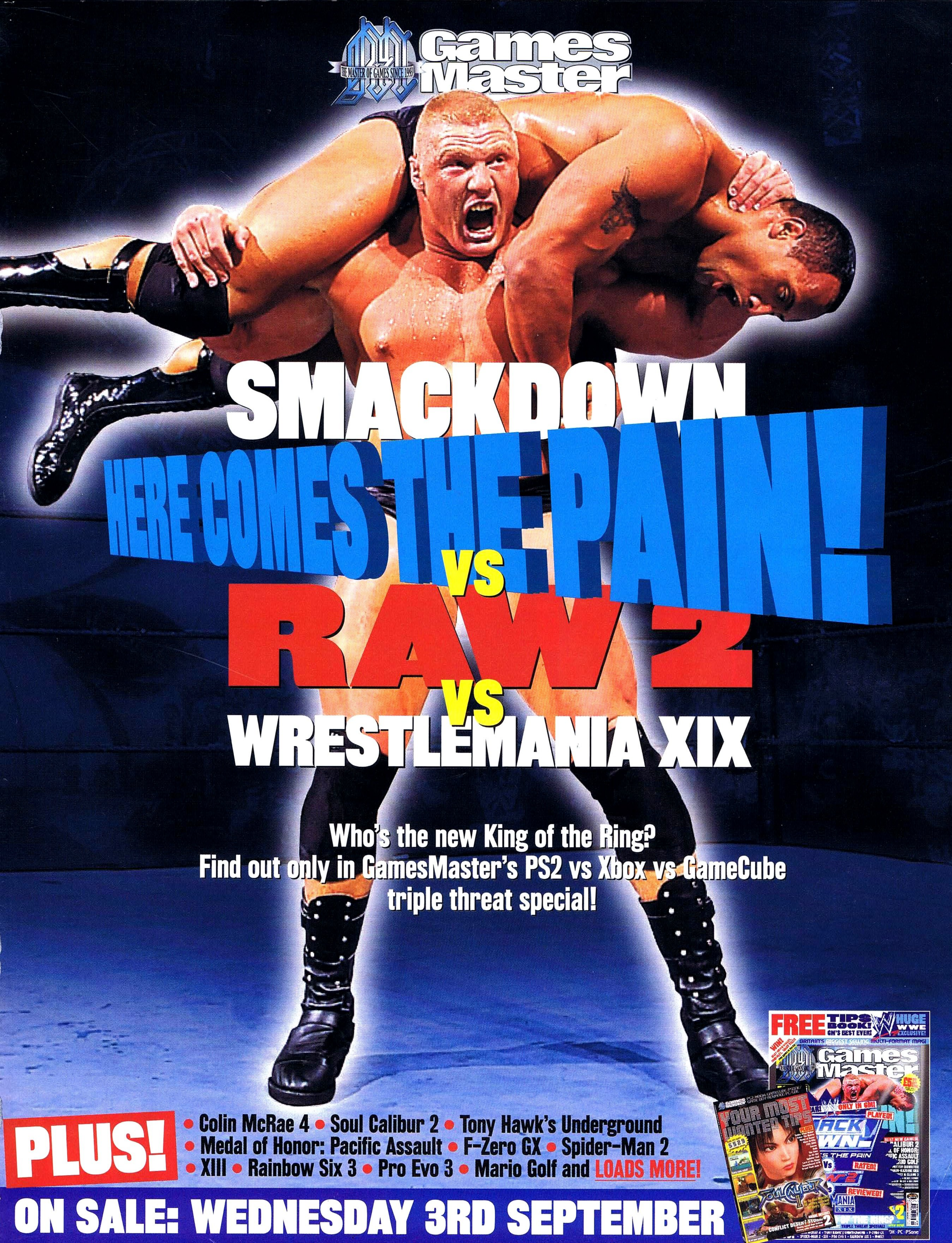
VERDICT

There's something compelling about *The Italian Job*, but it's only a third of a game, ruined by a lack of variety and a four-hour lifespan.





DID YOU KNOW? Developers Climax are based in Brighton. Hmm, that'd explain the extraordinarily tiny city then…


THE MASTER OF GAMES SINCE 1991
GamesMaster
SMACKDOWN
HERE COMES THE PAIN!
VS
RAW 2
VS
WRESTLEMANIA XIX
Who's the new King of the Ring?
Find out only in GamesMaster's PS2 vs Xbox vs GameCube
triple threat special!
PLUS!
• Colin McRae 4 • Soul Calibur 2 • Tony Hawk's Underground
• Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault • F-Zero GX • Spider-Man 2
• XIII • Rainbow Six 3 • Pro Evo 3 • Mario Golf and LOADS MORE!
ON SALE: WEDNESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER
FREE TIPS BOOK!
HUGE WWE EXCLUSIVE!
GamesMaster

"*Tony Hawk's 4* with simplified controls and Disney characters"



△ The sickening 'Well Howdy There' move.



△ Look, it's a real kid. *Real*, I tells ya. Or is it Jane?



△ Good, wholesome fun in the supermarket. Of course, if you tried this in a real supermarket, the security staff would be well within their rights to forcibly 'Casper' your skateboard into your half-pipe. Sideways.



△ The only dual-character boarders in the game. Great animation.



△ Tony Hawk never had to put up with this kind of stuff.



△ The Sun should start a campaign against Tarzan for this. The pervert.



△ You'll believe a cowboy can skate. And, you know, he can. He really can.

+

- Disney look.
- Create-a-skater.
- Solid gameplay.
- Very cute.

–

- A bit simplistic for experienced players.
- Yet another skateboard game.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Disney Sports Skateboarding
Konami
NGC/80 64%
More skating with the Disney crew. Not as good.

7 VISUALS

Good animation and a nicely smooth frame rate.

8 SOUNDS

Some 'real' music, some Disney stuff, and voices.

5 MASTERY

It's a reworking of an existing game. Nothing really new.

7 LIFESPAN

Plenty of customisation options, and nicely structured play.

VERDICT

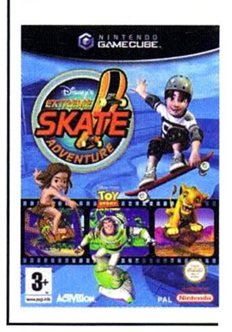
Tony Hawk rides again, wearing a Buzz Lightyear gimpsuit. It's the skateboarding game for anyone who finds the trickier ones too frustrating.



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INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER	TOYS FOR BOB
RELEASE DATE	5TH SEPT
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	9
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE

Just as Walt intended, cartoon characters meet extreme sports (again). Now with real kids!

Just so there's no confusion, what we've got here is *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4* with simplified controls and Disney characters. Hang on a minute – keep reading.

This might not be the most thrilling premise for a game, but it's actually quite good. Particularly if you're young (or old) enough to have found the *Pro Skater* titles thumb-twistingly difficult.

The action is basically identical to the familiar *Tony Hawk* gameplay, except with a far more forgiving control scheme. Balancing is easier, you use fewer buttons and you can string together stunt combos without having perfect timing. Cranking up the difficulty level makes it a bit more of a challenge, but it's never as tough as the real thing.

FROZEN HEADS

The authentic Disney look is the best thing about the game, with characters from Toy Story, Tarzan and The Lion King (many of them voiced by the original actors) skating around levels based on the movies.

Characters can only be used in their own specific levels, for some bizarre reason, so you can't see what Buzz Lightyear would look like in a jungle setting. Just in case you wanted to.

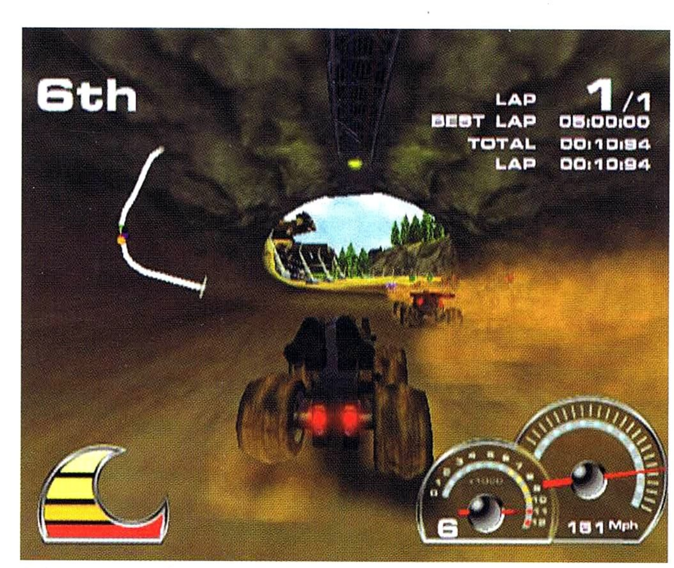
The only skaters who can go everywhere in the game are the ones you design yourself in the character creation mode. These big-headed kids can be designed from the trainers up, or you can choose one based on a handful of existing children who are, apparently, real people digitised by Activision's talent scouts.

If you've played *Tony Hawk's* before, you'll have experienced almost everything this game has to offer, bar the graphics.

That's not to say that younger players, or the young at heart, won't find plenty to enjoy here. *Pro Skater* is for the pro gamers, but your little brother or your gran might get a kick out of *Extreme Skate Adventure*.

MARTIN KITTS





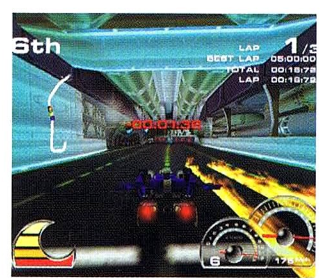
Δ Pass over a turbo icon on the floor and you'll be boosted forwards. Not that you'll really notice much of an increase in speed as a result.



Δ Rear view – the only time you'll see the other competitors.



Δ The burning trails are left by 'speeding' vehicles. Interesting.



Δ After *F-Zero GX*, we want all racing games to run at 60fps.



Δ Battling at the back of the pack isn't something you'll do a lot of.



Δ Where we're going, we don't need wheels. The merits of this particular power-up are dubious, but it does add a nice tilt to the horizon.



- 18 vehicles based on real Lego things.
- Drag races, street circuits and off-road.



- Too easy.
- Low frame rate for a racing game.
- Quite dull.



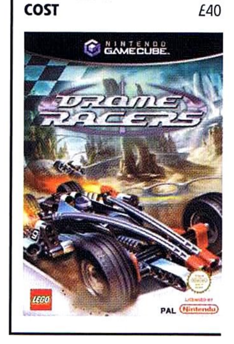
IF YOU LIKE THIS...

F-Zero GX
Nintendo
NGC/85 93%
Low-end racers are fine while they last, but this is how it should be done.



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	ATD
RELEASE DATE	10TH OCT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



DROME RACERS

Lego racing without Lego men. Could this be the *F-Zero* for the younger generation? In a word: no.

It's the future, and with Formula One long since having yawned off into retirement, people are looking for new ways to satisfy their taste for pace.

Flip over the next couple of pages and you'll see that they could wait a little while longer and have *F-Zero GX*, the fastest, most exciting racing series ever devised.

Alternatively, right here, right now, there's *Drome Racers*. The Lego alternative to *F-Zero*, aimed squarely at the under-12s.

While we're not going to slam a game for going for the less discerning end of the market, the most important thing is that it's good at what it does. But we'd be happy to wager that the average 10-year-old will be much happier with the likes of *Burnout* or *F-Zero* than this rather uninspired, instantly forgettable attempt to make a future racer for the kids.

> THE MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT DROME RACERS IS ABOUT AS CHALLENGING A DRIVE AS A MINI CAR ON A MERRY-GO-ROUND

WHEN IN DROME...

The main problem is that *Drome Racers* is about as challenging a drive as a miniature car on a merry-go-round. All you have to do is jam in the right shoulder button, then pelt around the track until you pick up a win that's almost guaranteed from the start. A drag-racing mini-game determines where you'll start on the six-place grid, but you might as well skip it to save time. Even if you start at the back of the pack, you'll be out in front before you've done a quarter of a lap, and from then on it's just you, your car, and the open road.

Sometimes you get shot by an unavoidable weapon fired from half a lap back by the chasing pack, which is mildly irritating, but you'll still have a hard time attempting to taste defeat.

Multiplayer games fare better, although the less-than-perfect frame rate and impossible-to-slide handling from the solo mode are carried through here, making it a rather dull experience.

The game tries to mask its deficiencies with layers of flashy presentation and a token attempt at a storyline – you play ace racer Max Axel, with a backup team at home in the garage and assorted rivals laying down one-on-one challenges. But it's no fun when you know that those so-called rivals aren't worthy of sharing the same track as you.

If this is what future racing will really be like, then Formula One is going to be with us for the next thousand years. And we were *so* looking forward to the Hovercar Death Race Championship too.

MARTIN KITTS

5 VISUALS
Better still than moving. Not as slick as it should be.

5 SOUNDS
The cheapo cartoon show school of voice-acting.

5 MASTERY
Includes a proper widescreen mode, which is nice.

6 LIFESPAN
Starts out easy and takes forever to put up a challenge.



VERDICT

Lacklustre racing game that offers absolutely nothing new and fails to do even the familiar things with any real flair. A bit poor.



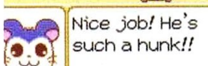


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△ The overworld map. Just move from rosette to rosette for new areas.



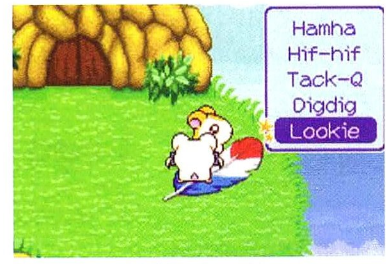






△ The game's central hub, as it were. Here you'll recieve orders about where you should go and what to do next.

HAMTARO
HAM-HAM HEARTBREAK



△ Ham-chat in all its glory. Utter nonsense.

Ham-tastic! Match-making, rock-polishing and nonsensical baby-banter in this sickening cute-'em-up…



When you reach our haggard old age, there's only so much saccharine sweetness that you can take. *Hamtaro*, then, was approached with a degree of trepidation.

The opening sequence is as good an example of the kind of horrifying cuteness you can expect. The game's villain, 'Spat the all-fibber' (?!?), is going around breaking the hearts of Ham-Hams, uncoupling the world's fluffy lovers and breaking friendships throughout the land. It's up to you, Hamtaro, and your cute missus, Bijou, to play cupid and bring peace to the world. It's enough to make you barf.

Until you start playing, that is. Try as you might, it's very difficult to be cynical in the face of such a charming little adventure. The game plays like a stripped-down version of *Zelda LTTP*. There's no combat and, rather than a sprawling overworld, the game is broken up into sections accessed via the map.

Each area has a number of tasks that you need to accomplish. These normally involve bringing depressed hamsters together in love and friendship, by completing the goals they set, finding items they've lost (in one instance you have to retrieve a potty training device so that two brothers can live in harmony once more, in another you need to win a dance contest to claim a flower) and generally being a hairy little do-gooder. Bring the two squabbling Ham-Hams together and your love meter will increase. The more love you have, the further you'll be able to progress.

On the face of it the game is simplistic, but *damn* if there weren't occasions when we were completely stumped as to what to do. Initially the game's logic is a little bewildering. You have to talk to the NPCs in order to learn baby-talk-like Ham Chats – like 'rub-rub' for 'polish' and 'smoochie' for 'love'. These Ham-Chats are the commands that you need to input in order to solve the puzzles. And in a game that revolves around niceness, it's odd that you have to hit some NPCs to gain the Ham-Chats you need.

But get over this, and put aside your grievances with the twee themes, and you'll find that there's a lot to enjoy here.

INFO BURST

FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30





△ Good grief, put a bleedin' sock in it. Just hammer at the A button to avoid tedium.







△ Aiming at the fast-moving ships is...

△ ...exceptionally tough with the D-pad.

WING COMMANDER

Or rather, 'Wing Commander: Prophecy'. If you can be bothered to care...



There may be a few **NGC** readers who sampled the Playstation iteration of the (frankly) painfully average *Wing Commander* series. Back in the day, the only thing it had 'going for it' (and we'll use that turn of phrase lightly) was the fact that it boasted hours of tedious FMV with a bunch of freaks dressed up as cats. Oh, and Mark 'Luke Skywalker' Hamill.



△ Flybys (powered by the Blue Rose engine) are as impressive as things get.

This GBA version is yet another space combat affair, only this time, all the bits that made the other versions average have been removed so that the game could become even more tedious than before. Clever stuff, no?

Yup, *Wing Commander* has carried on the series' proud tradition of being a complete WOF (Waste Of Time). True, the game certainly looks impressive, with lovely polygonal ships doing battle in the void of the cosmos. The only problem is that on the game's tiny screen and with the GBA's D-pad, actually aiming, flying and practically anything else is more likely to stretch your eyes, reflexes and patience to the absolute limit.

To top it all off, the game's dialogue that you have to wade through in between missions is some of the dullest we've ever experienced. Just forget it...



△ Getting a lock on your target (easier said than done) allows you to fire missiles.

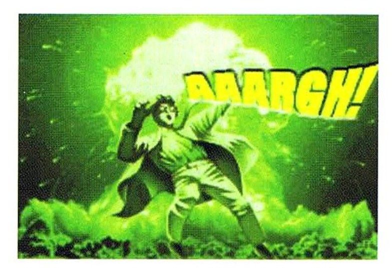


INFO BURST

FROM	CAPCOM
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

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△ The artwork in the stills and the ability...



△ ...to smash stuff is as good as it gets.



△ Smack multiple enemies at a time and you'll be rewarded with a super smash bonus.

THE HULK

An isometric scrolling film-themed beat-'em-up that's anything *but* smashing...



Subtle' isn't a word you'd normally associate with the The Incredible Hulk and unsurprisingly – albeit for all the wrong reasons – it's not a word you could easily attribute to this game of the same name.

It all starts off surprisingly well. A short series of nice, well-drawn stills introduces the story and the action that follows, before whisking you into the game proper, which, for the opening few levels at least, proves to be a rather tedious exercise. Hulk himself is controlled through one normal attacking button (a series of wildly flung punches) and a jump button (to avoid electrified floors), while the shoulder buttons activate powerful Hulk smash-style attacks.

Essentially, then, the game revolves around you wandering the isometric landscapes hitting bad guys while you work your way from point A to point B, fulfilling objectives along the way. Objectives which normally involve finding three things and smashing them up.

It's all painfully average stuff, but there are still some nice touches. You have the ability to smash up the surroundings and doorways, and lobbing Jeeps and at your enemies is rather satisfying, but, unfortunately, more wasn't made of this aspect. Disappointing.





△ The red arrows indicate your destination.



INFO BURST

FROM	UNIVERSAL
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

59

"Exudes a kind of punchy confidence"

SPEED STRIPS
These are vital to success. Learning where they are will save your boost power (assuming you hit them all) and will quite often allow you to take shortcuts.

YOUR RIVAL
The racer who most threatens your position on the leader board is flagged. Either beat him or ram him into oblivion (that's the more amusing option).

YOUR SHIP
There are over 30 of these, and most have to be bought from the game's shop. You can also visit the game's garage to create new ones.

ATTACKING
You have two different modes of attack. You can hit X and a direction (left or right) to give a cheeky nudge to the side – this is great for knocking rivals off thin sections of track – or you can use the spin attack, which can hit out at groups of vehicles in a pack.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	AMUSEMENT VISION
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW (JAP)
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£60-£70 ON IMPORT



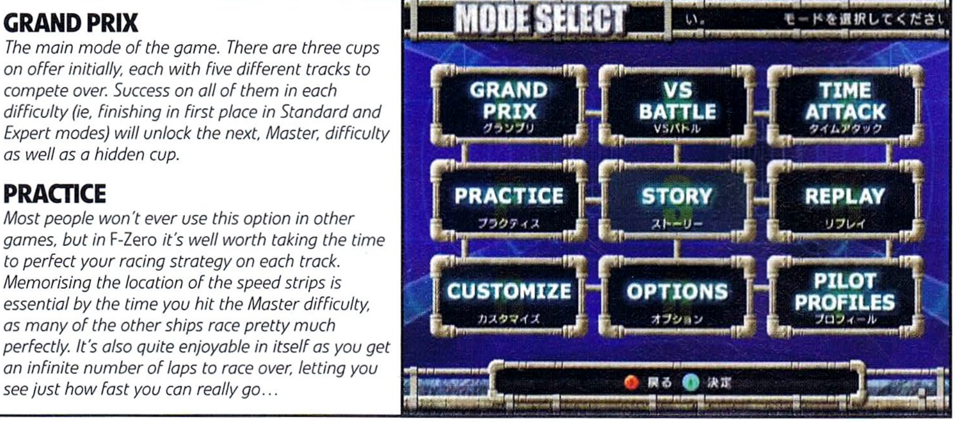
F-ZERO GX

Nintendo and Sega collide! The first of the collaborative Triforce games appears. It's quite simply the fastest thing in the universe…



GRAND PRIX
The main mode of the game. There are three cups on offer initially, each with five different tracks to compete over. Success on all of them in each difficulty (ie, finishing in first place in Standard and Expert modes) will unlock the next, Master, difficulty as well as a hidden cup.

PRACTICE
Most people won't ever use this option in other games, but in F-Zero it's well worth taking the time to perfect your racing strategy on each track. Memorising the location of the speed strips is essential by the time you hit the Master difficulty, as many of the other ships race pretty much perfectly. It's also quite enjoyable in itself as you get an infinite number of laps to race over, letting you see just how fast you can really go…





△ You'll always start at the back of the pack so a speed boost from the blocks helps.



△ Using the jumps to your advantage, you can cut out whole sections of the track.



△ The boost is the key to victory. Use too much too soon and you don't stand a chance.



△ This level in Story mode is quite smart. You have to race Goroh through falling boulders.

A DOOMSDAY AT THE RACES

Take a look at some of the environments you'll be hurtling around.



This is Aeropolis. There are two tracks in this stunning, glittering metropolis, featuring insane jumps that'll have you plummeting for miles and rollercoaster tours around the beautiful skyscrapers.



The first Sand Ocean track has some stunning scenery. Look out for the giant sandstorm shaped like a snake's head. The later track can be brutally tough, with treacherous drops and bottlenecks.



The Green Plant Tracks make fantastic speedways. These tree-lined raceways feature long banking turns and, in one instance, a clear glass tube that threads in and out of the track. Lovely.



Mute City's the signature F-Zero environment with glaring neon signs, jumps ripe for shortcut-taking and drops that will make you gasp.

If we weren't feeling so… so *relieved*, we might be better equipped to convey just how excited we've all felt by the arrival of *F-Zero*. You see, the months since E3 have proved a little tough on us. It's difficult to hide our disappointment about *Mario Kart's* lack of speed, for example. It's been even more difficult to hide our concern over Nintendo's lack of aggression at the E3 Press Conference in May. *F-Zero*, it's safe to say, has reinvigorated the atmosphere in the **NGC** office. It's *exactly* what the doctor ordered – and we *love* it for it.

3… 2… 1…

F-Zero isn't shy. Not in the slightest. Even stabbing A to nudge your way past the opening memory card configuration screens and into the game's main options is enough to make you tremble with excitement. The front end exudes a kind of punchy confidence and no-nonsense immediacy that is perfectly fitting for the sort of full-throttle arcade experience that *F-Zero* so blatantly is. The second you hit the track in the game's main Grand Prix mode and fly off the starting block you'll be totally, utterly transfixed.

You see, if ever a game deserved a perfect 10 for 'Mastery' in our review summary then this is it. *F-Zero's* speed is nothing short of exemplary – but then, we wouldn't expect anything less, would we? What really takes the biscuit is that while it's blisteringly fast, it's also intensely chaotic.



△ While the camp FMV has been the cause of constant sniggering in the office, it's still rather nice to see the *F-Zero* folk brought to life…

"You find yourself clenching your buttocks"



△ That purple strip up ahead will replenish your boost and shield power.



△ Before every race you're treated to an awe inspiring fly-by of the track. It really is a sight to behold.



△ Hit your boost just before a jump and you'll get quite a view...

△ On the higher difficulty levels the computer-controlled racers can be quite aggressive. On more than one occasion the sods shunted us off the track.



△ These tubular courses can be quite disorientating, and memorising the...



△ ...whereabouts of all the boosts – and therefore ensuring victory – is tricky.

Chaotic in the sense that each and every track is alive with dazzling neon lights, massive towering structures and environmental animations such as flying drones and breathtaking sand-storms.

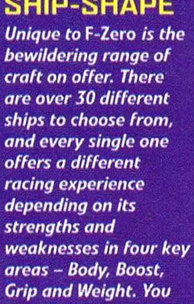
As if those weren't enough in themselves, the detail present on everything in the game is incredible. Whether it's a giant snake's head, a trackside billboard, a beautifully designed building or a hovering cruiser, everything is rich in detail, solidly built and, in those oh-so brief periods where you can afford to indulge yourself, a pleasure to behold.

Such a proliferation of trackside detail might seem purely cosmetic but it does serve another function. As anyone who ever played *F-Zero X* on the N64 will testify, despite being exceptionally quick, there was virtually nothing at the side of the track to help enhance that feeling of speed. Moreover, with track orientation frequently resembling a twisted intestinal tract, there were few environmental reference points to help you visualise yourself plunging down vertical drops or racing upside down around a wildly looping rollercoaster.

Not so with *F-Zero GX*. The tracks boast so much detail that, if you're upside down, boosting up a vertical incline or, in one instance, threading your way up and down through a previous section of track, you genuinely feel as though you're doing so – and a quick glance at your surroundings will confirm this.

As a result, the experience is far more exhilarating than anything the *F-Zero* series has ever delivered. Exhilarating to the point where you find yourself clenching your buttocks so hard, you'll have crimped the edge of your sofa by the time the race is over.

Combine this with 29 additional racers on screen and a frame rate that never, repeat, *never* falters, and you're



SHIP-SHAPE

Unique to F-Zero is the bewildering range of craft on offer. There are over 30 different ships to choose from, and every single one offers a different racing experience depending on its strengths and weaknesses in four key areas – Body, Boost, Grip and Weight. You can also change your acceleration to speed ratio, ensuring that no matter what level of skill you are, you'll have more than enough choice to satisfy your needs.



△ The amount of action taking place beside the track is absolutely incredible. See the giant drills working at the molten lava below?



△ You actually race through the glass tunnel you see in front of you here.



△ The 'check' behind your craft lets you know where the chasing ship is.



△ You could never criticise *F-Zero* for lacking interesting track design.





△ The Vagas Palace tracks are among the fastest available in the game.



△ Chicanes on this lightning track will be the bane of your existence.

THE GARAGE

This would be better with the arcade link up, but it's a lovely feature all the same. Here you can buy new ship parts as you win races, allowing you to create a vehicle of your own design. And there are hundreds of exotics bits to choose from…









looking at one of the most technically impressive games in recent years.

The massive visual improvement is, naturally, the biggest difference between *F-Zero* and earlier games in the series. When it come down to the way the game plays, fans of the series will feel right at home. The rules of the game are simple. Choose a vehicle, alter its acceleration to maximum speed ratio and away you go. Simple.

On the track are 30 racers all jostling for the number one spot over five races per cup. To help you on your way there are a number of jumps and, more importantly, speed boosts to help you gain the advantage. Complete one lap and you'll be allowed to activate your 'Boost Power' – a means of increasing your speed temporarily at the cost of your shield power. Run out of shield power and crash and it's game over. Fall off the track and it's game over. Complete the game in last place and, while you'll be able to progress, the number of points you'll be rewarded with will be so pathetic that you may as well call it game over. Again.

"ONE SIMPLE MISTAKE CAN MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAKING THE TOP FIVE AND A DISMAL POSITION IN THE 20S"

Unlike every other future racer on the planet, there are no weapons. Instead you have a ramming manoeuvre and a spin attack if you wish to race more aggressively. To be perfectly honest with you, these are best left alone in favour of pokey acceleration to get ahead.



THE 'SNAKE' GLITCH…

You may already have heard rumours of this, so we'll put your minds to rest. It's a means of increasing your speed through repeated use of the air-brakes (we won't go into it here) and many have claimed that it spoils your enjoyment of the game. To be honest, the glitch takes a huge amount of skill to use to your advantage and is often completely impractical on many of the courses. In fact, it's doubtful many will even notice it exists…

F-Zero, while completely insane in terms of speed and pack fighting, is a very pure racer indeed, demanding the utmost concentration, not only to master the controls and navigate the wildly varying types of track, but also to perfect your racing strategy to guarantee victory. Because the game is so fast and the rival racers so tightly packed together, one simple mistake can mean the difference between making the top five and a dismal position in the high 20s.

SUPER ZERO

The way to succeed in *GX* is to master the use of your boost. Do you make sure you keep a load in reserve and then squander it all in one ludicrous late orgy of speed, safe in the knowledge that the pit lane is just around the corner, or should you be conservative, bring up the rear, and blow it all in a last-ditch attempt to work through the pack? This is the kind of choice you have mid-

"Too much speed combined with perilous courses can bring instant failure"



△ The spinning attack in action. To be honest, there's little use for it in the GP mode – unless you're after your rival.



△ This track can be particularly lethal, as buckled wiry mesh can force fast-moving ships to catapult into the air.



△ Big Blue is one of the most attractive tracks, with lovely cascading waterfalls.



△ There are detailed pilot profiles for each character and also some extra FMV.



△ Nope. That's not the road down there. The track is even *further* down!

race, and choosing a strategy makes racing a very tense experience. Even more so when you consider that too much speed combined with perilous courses can bring instant failure. Co-developers Sega have capitalised on these facets of the game and delivered a racer that is *genuinely* exciting and really has the power to get under your skin, leaving you a nervous wreck (or shrieking like a girl) when you pip the first-placed racer to the post.

Much of this is due, in part, to the tight difficulty level of the game. *F-Zero* has already come under a great deal of criticism for this, but we'd be hard pushed to mark the game down because of it. Yes, the game is tough, very tough, but it's nothing that can't be remedied with a little practice…

LOCAL ZERO

When you start the more difficult cups on the Normal setting, your first play will inevitably result in failure through your complete inability to stay on the track. This isn't frustrating, however. Reloading a cup and returning to the point at which you failed is a quick process, and repeatedly attempting each stage is actually crucial to learning the intricacies of each level. By the time you've cleared all the cups on the Normal setting and made some headway into Expert mode, returning to the same tracks in Normal seems like an absolute doddle.

Naturally, going up a difficulty level makes things even tougher still, but the same rules apply. That which you initially found impossible will eventually be all too easy as you become more skillful. Hardly a reason for criticism, and in light of the current crop of games on Gamecube it's refreshing to have a game that's this challenging.

DESIGNED FOR STRIFE

The track design in GX varies wildly from cup to cup. While some tracks allow you to cruise around gentle curves and wide roads at high speed, others feature sharp bends, perilously thin roads (with nothing to stop you plummeting to your doom) and frightening tracks with massive drops and gaps to navigate. Each track then becomes a test of different F-Zero skills, requiring varying strategies to getting past the finish line in one piece.

LAST ACTION ZERO

This steep learning curve is even more evident in the game's Story mode. In this section you're presented with a series of little challenges that need to be completed within a strict time limit or along a specific length of track. These can range from racing a rival while dodging boulders falling onto the road, collecting a set amount of pick-ups over three laps, taking out a rival with your spin attack or simply completing tough races in first place.

There are three difficulties on each challenge, with the 'Very Hard' difficulty giving you a goal that's virtually impossible. Thankfully you don't have to beat the hardest difficulty to move the



Δ Every stab at the boost button sends you roaring ahead. Cane it too much, though, and you'll be in serious trouble.







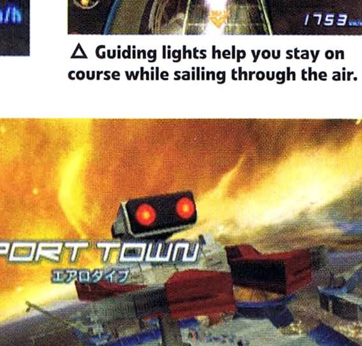
Δ Guiding lights help you stay on course while sailing through the air.





Δ The Cosmic Terminal has narrow vertical roads and no barrier between you and oblivion.

Δ Thankfully, this jump isn't quite as hard as it looks as you're surprisingly manoeuvrable mid-air.



Δ There he is, look. Good old R.O.B the Robot. Shame you barely have time to see him.

story along. Instead, you buy new chapters from the game's shop.

Again, the Story mode has been criticised for being too difficult, but again, this is rather unfair. The Story mode's a cracking bonus (there's some wonderfully camp FMV of Captain Falcon and co before and after each chapter) and again, each challenge is very short and so constantly trying to complete them rarely becomes much of a chore. It's the kind of addition that, once you've honed your skills to perfection, you'll often revisit in order to bump up your high scores.

ZERO-WORSHIP

After all that praise, you'd think there was nothing wrong with the game. To be honest, there really isn't that much wrong with it at all.

It's *F-Zero* – undiluted, compulsive and frighteningly fast. AV haven't really done much to change the formula – you could argue either way as to whether or not this is a good thing – which is bound to please devoted fans of the series, and, with the stunning new face-lift, it should hopefully tempt newcomers. That's hardly a criticism.

The only thing that we can really think of is that the game can often be unnecessarily cruel. The Opposition certainly don't pull any punches for starters, and quite often you'll find yourself on the winning stretch only to be shunted off of the final section by an erratic CPU racer.

We suppose you could argue that it would have been a smart move to have included a few more tracks, but then, compared to something like *XG3*, 20-plus (which isn't even including the hidden AX tracks and Story mode courses) seems like a very healthy selection of tracks indeed – especially when you consider the quality of design on each one.

Last, and this isn't really a criticism of the game as such, we strongly advise against picking up the Japanese version of the game. While the FMV is all voiced in English, the Character Profiles are in Japanese, as are the instructions for Custom mode, a place where you can buy ship parts, edit their appearance and so forth to create your own vehicle.

So that's all we can find to complain about because, quite frankly, *F-Zero* is one of the most expertly crafted arcade racers we've had the pleasure to play.

GERAINT EVANS

> **"THE GAME CAN OFTEN BE UNNECESSARILY CRUEL. THE OPPOSITION CERTAINLY DON'T PULL ANY PUNCHES"**



A MAN OF FEW WORDS...

Now this is a very bizarre addition. On winning any one of the cups, you're taken to this interview screen where you see your chosen racer standing with a TV presenter. After being asked a question you get the chance to answer with a ludicrously cheesy one-liner and a camp bit of posturing that'll make your skin crawl. From what we can gather it serves no purpose whatsoever, but we can't deny that it made us chuckle.



- Blisteringly fast.
- Visually gorgeous.
- Instantly accessible.
- Very challenging.

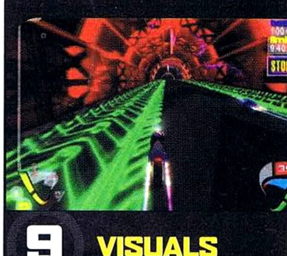


- More tracks would have been nice…
- Won't be able to use the arcade link.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Extreme G3
Acclaim
NGC/67 85%
A super-fast future racer – but compared to *F-Zero* it doesn't cut it any more.



9 VISUALS
Colourful, detailed and very, very fast. A feast for the eyes.

8 SOUNDS
Adrenaline-fuelled techno-rock and meaty rocket effects.

10 MASTERY
Amazing. You'll never accept slowdown in games ever again.

9 LIFESPAN
Rock hard, but great for it. The multiplayer will last you ages…



VERDICT

Exactly what we wanted out of *F-Zero*. The speed, the challenge and the stunningly designed tracks. *Unmissable.*





"The fun of whacking the ball past Thwomps"

HOW FAR, HOW HIGH?

The answers to those crucial golfing questions can be found right here, on your ever-lovin' stats readout. Worth bearing in mind.

ROUGH AND SMOOTH

Two types of fairway, three types of rough, and plenty of other things to hit your ball into. Mostly involving grass of various lengths.

SWING METER

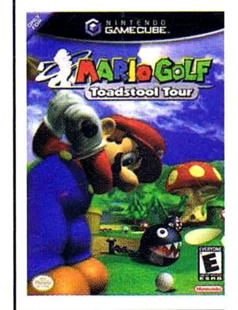
Automatic or manual. Both methods are useful, even for expert players.

FLIGHT PATH

No more guesswork. If the ball isn't going to make it past an obstacle, you'll know because the flight path will stop as soon as it crosses the obstruction.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	CAMELOT
RELEASE DATE	NOW (US)
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	13
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£50-£65 ON IMPORT



MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR

When you're talking about club classics, don't forget Mazza's latest release. This is one tour to follow the group on.



While his dungarees wouldn't be permitted in any respectable clubhouse (unless there was a backed-up toilet to unturd) Mario's golfing skills transcend the traditionally stuffy sport.

Four years ago, *Mario Golf 64* turned out to be the best golf game of the N64 era. Traditional golf controls combined with classic characters and minigames to create an accessible, deceptively deep sports sim. And now it's making a welcome, high-res return on Gamecube.

If you ever played the original, you'll be right at home with *Toadstool Tour*. If not, it'll take you all of five minutes to get used to the sequel's basic controls which, at least to begin with, are even simpler than before.

It's the standard swing meter affair – press a button to start swinging, and press again to set the power and accuracy. Perhaps it seems old-fashioned after the analogue controls of *Tiger Woods*, but it makes it a whole lot easier to get the distance right.

EASY DRIVER

The game gives you two ways of doing things. You can press A to set the power, at which point the computer will take care of the rest, or B to initiate full manual controls.

In manual mode you have to press the button again to fix the accuracy, but you benefit from the ability to enter two-button combos that can give your tee shots an extra 10 yards on the fairway or help the ball scoot clean out of a bunker.

Other than that, it's pretty much what you'd expect from a top-of-the-range golf game. There's a very wide range of different surfaces with which the ball can interact, from flower beds to solid rock. The physics appear to be realistic enough and, unlike last time, the wind meter is easy to read.

The camera is one thing that doesn't always work as you might expect. For some reason you can only inspect the course along the ball's predicted flight path – there's no way to move around freely to get a feel for the course layout. When putting, larger characters such as Bowser obscure the hole, and the camera sometimes fails to move in time to catch the ball as it drops into the hole or rolls just wide, so you don't get to see why you missed or by how much.

MUSHROOM IN HERE

Apart from that, *Toadstool Tour* has no significant problems. The 16 players are all from the Mario universe, unlike



BOO! HISS!

Golf is a game to take your time over, analysing shots and contemplating angles. At least, that's the way we like to play it. But every time you leave the controls alone for ten seconds, pairs of Boos fly across the already-cluttered screen, trailing banners to inform you of the controls. There's no way to switch this irritating feature off. Let's hope it's dropped for the Euro release.

DID YOU KNOW? The mighty Diddy Kong is in this game. Yep. And for what it's worth, we're still trying to swallow the little bit of sick that leaked into our mouths after seeing him.

MARIO GOLF

What the Mushroom Kingdom gang do on their days off

CADDY SHACK

Brand new features for 2003…



Birdie Challenge. *Nine holes on the purpose-built Congo Canopy course, way up in the treetops. The aim is to finish the entire thing with successive birdies.*



Special Spin. *When setting the power, double-tap the button to add some turf-burning topspin or backspin. Tapping button combos gives you Super Spin!*



Star Players. *Unlike in MG64, where challenging characters was how you unlocked them, now you just win a more powerful version of that player.*



Coin Attack. *Collect as many coins as possible on your way to potting the ball. In one version of this mode, the coins must be collected in the first two shots.*

△ It's random club time.

△ Birdo shoots for the ring.



△ **Wario is one of the more powerful characters, but his shots tend to swerve to one side.**



△ **Hit a perfect shot and you get special effects such as a rainbow for Yoshi, or Bowser's fireball.**



△ **Bowser lets another one go. Press B during the ball's flight if you want to watch a replay.**

MG64's mixture of Mushroom Kingdom and generic cartoon characters. Strangely, only four of them are locked from the start. One of those can be found in less than an hour's play, and another in under a day.

There are six courses that open up one after another, with the first four being beautiful, if familiar, 'real world' lookalikes. They're certainly challenging if you resist the temptation to save the game before every hole in a tourney. However, the real visual treats are tucked away in the final two courses. They're based around landmarks from previous Mario games, notably *Super Mario 64*, and are unquestionably the best parts of the game.

The other courses are easier to play, and therefore better suited to using for multiplayer games, but after you've had the fun of whacking the ball past Thwomps, Chain Chomps and all the way up to King Bob-omb's mountain from *Mario 64*'s first level, you might wonder why the designers didn't include a couple more Ninty-themed courses of this sort.

As well as the normal Tournament mode there's a good selection of extras to play with. Alternative rules and handicaps are available, as are minigames and other modes. You can take on the 12 main characters in one-on-one modes to boost their stats, or just play favourite holes to retry difficult shots – which are then saved to the memory card if the computer thinks they're good enough.

Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour isn't going to shake the golf game establishment to its foundations, but it has as much depth as any of its competitors, and considerably more character.

It doesn't have as many players as *Tiger Woods*, or as many unlockable extras, and there's always going to be a sneering minority eager to dismiss it as a game for kids.

But take a leisurely stroll around one of the Princess' par fives, and we think you'll agree that golf has rarely been more enjoyable.

MARTIN KITTS

> **"THE FINAL TWO COURSES ARE BASED AROUND LANDMARKS FROM PREVIOUS MARIO GAMES"**



SECRETS?

Compared to MG64, unlocking characters doesn't take much effort. You get one for completing the Ring Shot mode, one for getting 50 Birdie Badges, another for getting all 108 Birdie Badges (hard!), and one for finishing the brief Practice mode, which will take no time at all. If there are any others, apart from whatever the GBA link-up offers, they're very well hidden.

+

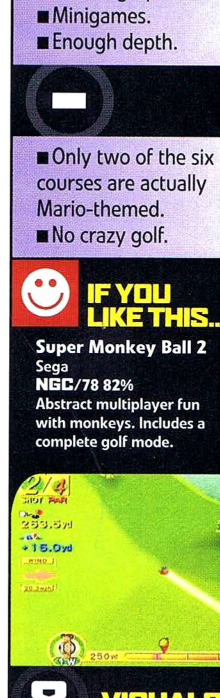
- Simple controls.
- Decent graphics.
- Minigames.
- Enough depth.

–

- Only two of the six courses are actually Mario-themed.
- No crazy golf.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Super Monkey Ball 2
Sega
NGC/78 82%
Abstract multiplayer fun with monkeys. Includes a complete golf mode.



8 VISUALS



The two Mario-themed courses look truly fantastic.

8 SOUNDS

Plenty of voice samples such as taunts and squeals.

7 MASTERY

Good controls, camera could have been improved.

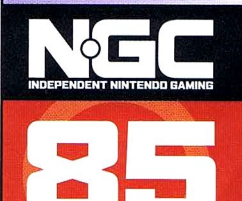
9 LIFESPAN



A monster of a multiplayer game, and a big challenge.

VERDICT

Not a huge leap from the N64 version, but with its improved characters and fine graphics, it's a worthy update of a golden oldie.

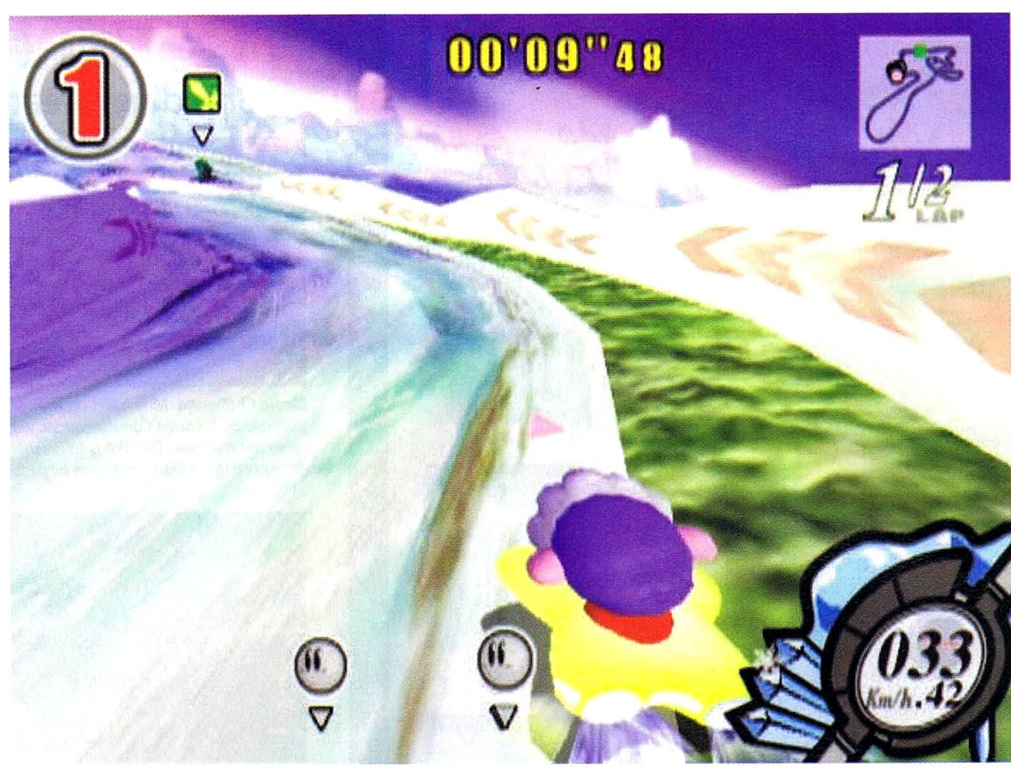


"The most skull-numbingly archaic title Nintendo have ground out"



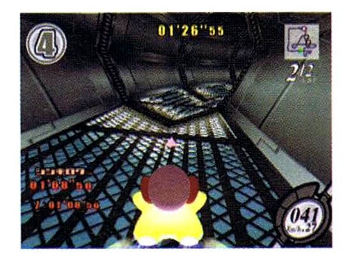
△ See that purple thing? Use Kirby's sucking power to swallow him up whole and take on his powers. Pretty easy, really.





△ Kirby the Snowman: when it gets chilly, Mr Blobby can hurl the snowballs and ice shards around like nobody's business.







INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	HAL LABS
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW (JAP)
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£45-£60 ON IMPORT





KIRBY'S AIR RIDE

Another gap in the release schedule, **another Kirby game** – and things aren't pretty in pink.

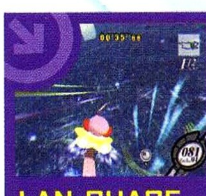
He's starred in such a succession of stinkers that it's hard to remember – *Smash Bros* apart – the last good game Kirby actually graced. Certainly *Kirby's Air Ride* isn't about to turn recent form on its head: this is probably the most skull-numbingly archaic title Nintendo have ground out in years, a game that has all the longevity of a stocking filler, and none of the enjoyment.

It seems staggering that Nintendo, of all people, should have created a game where you can sit back, controller on the table in front of you, and watch the in-game action unfold (and the level complete itself) without actually pushing any buttons at all. Admittedly, to clock up the best times and the highest positions, you'll need to throw the analogue stick left and right, but if you wanted to see what *Kirby's Air Ride* had to offer, you could just as easily sit back with a cup of coffee and watch what is, effectively, a game for two-year-olds.

And slow two-year-olds at that.

The Air Ride of the title is a race for four players (three computer friends if you haven't got available humans), entirely on rails, where Kirbs can use his sucking-and-trying ability to borrow the skills of the various creatures and personalities dotted around the course. The idea is to give him an advantage: for example, Kirby can gain icy cool spikes, which protect him against other racers and allow him to fire off shards of frozen stuff at the other members of the pack. At heart, it's a cross between previous Kirby games and *Mario Kart*, with some *F-Zero* chucked in.

Certainly, the premise has potential (and the engine, if it weren't on rails, could be a basis for a more intelligent future title), but problems aren't far from the surface. The fact that the game *is* on rails means it feels incredibly restrictive. You can pass opponents in the same way as you do in a standard racing game, but you're constantly carried forward by the CPU (there's no acceleration button) so the main challenge is a tedious one – to avoid smashing into corners and chicanes. But even that can be taken off your hands if you so fancy, with the game propelling



LAN-GUAGE

Bizarrely, for a game aimed at young kids, Kirby's Air Ride has a LAN option in it, allowing you to link together four Gamecubes for a moderately enhanced multiplayer mode. Odd, considering the game already includes a comprehensive four-player mode, and it's odder still that Nintendo would decide to stick the option into what's effectively a kid's game.

DID YOU KNOW? Kirby is the star of a cartoon running in Japan and the USA. Anyone seen it? Do tell us what it's like, eh..?

KIRBY'S AIR RIDE

About as substantial as a puff of wind

△ The spikes provide a natural form of protection for Kirby, although if there are no opponents close by then there's very little point to it.



△ The game does include a turbo, but as you can finish third without even touching the controller, there's very little reason to use it.

THE BLOB IS BACK

Kirby puts on a wheel. And a snow hat.



When Kirby comes over cold, he can access ice shards and a kind of blizzard – pictured here – which will knock fellow racers well out of their stride.



A cute little addition, this: Kirby becomes Link. The problem is, you've got to be close to an opponent in order to make use of the weeny elf's sword skills.



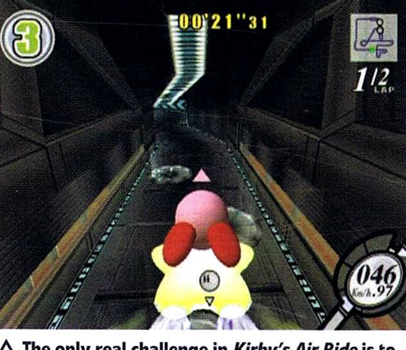
Kirby's wheel form, somewhat pleasingly, turns out to be – get this – 'wheely' good. It's probably the only real power-up that gains you a genuine advantage.



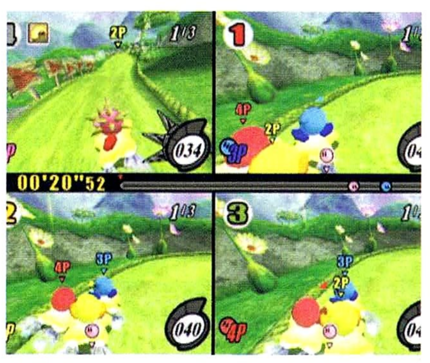

"Love lift us up where we belong, where the eagles fly and the... things... it... la..." Er, anyway: winged Kirby can cut corners. Trouble is, he's pretty sluggish.



△ The levels swing from closed areas to wide open spaces – it's reminiscent of a fluffier *F-Zero*.



△ The only real challenge in *Kirby's Air Ride* is to avoid crashing into walls. Hardly exciting stuff.



△ The four-player mode provides slightly more entertainment, but you'll eventually tire of it.

you forward constantly so, even if you can't be arsed to negotiate corners properly, you'll be bumped out of them quickly enough by the computer.

BLOB POINTLESS

There are similar flaws to the power-up system. Hoovering up other people's powers is an age-old Kirby device, but here you learn to use it to your *disadvantage*, because inhaling everything around him slows him down and, therefore, makes the otherwise simplistic task of finishing first slightly more difficult. Firing off shards of ice or turning Kirby into a wheel in order to batter the other racers only serves to make the game less interesting.

Which begs the question, what *is* there to do in *Kirby's Air Ride*? The answer, sadly, is not a lot. There's a glow of nostalgia that emanates from the heart of the game, like playing *NES Metroid* in *Metroid Prime*, and as a four-player game, it offers a degree of longevity, in exactly the way you'd expect it to.

In fact, four-player *Air Ride* hangs together, loosely at least, thanks to the fact that knowing your opponent is whole lot more enjoyable than following generic computer Kirby in one-player, and human players tend to have a wider range of skills than the numbnuts who have been programmed into the main mode to give you a 'run for your money'. But it's hard to think of anything else than truly excels in *Kirby's Air Ride*. It's a game in tune with much of Nintendo's third-tier output – simplistic, unremarkable and undemanding – and, like the tired *Mario Party* series, it's hard to see yourself pursuing its challenge (or, more importantly, particularly wanting to) further than a couple of quick goes on the demo in HMV.

As a result, this can only rank as another disappointment for the pink blob, and further confirm his role as a poor alternative to Mazza and Link.

TIM WEAVER

"THERE'S A GLOW OF NOSTALGIA EMANATING FROM THE HEART OF THE GAME, BUT LITTLE ELSE..."

TRIALLIST

Because the main game is basically a four-player mode in itself, additional options in Kirby's Air Ride are fairly limited. In fact, there's really just the Time Trial. And, in a way, this represents some of the game's most consistently enjoyable moments, as mastering the flawed game design and shaving seconds off your time feels like a small achievement.

+

- Just the ticket if you like zero challenge.
- Solid multiplayer.
- Engine's not bad.

−

- Too easy.
- Too restrictive.
- Too basic.
- Too boring.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Super Smash Bros Melee
Nintendo
NGC/68 95%
See Kirby at his best. And punch him in the face.

7 VISUALS

It's a design cop-out when it's on rails, but it looks pleasant.

7 SOUNDS

Compelling mix of keyboard tunes and classical-type music.

4 MASTERY

You couldn't really say it pushes the Gamecube hardware.

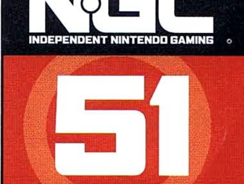
5 LIFESPAN

Multiplayer mode's quite good and time trial's funnish.

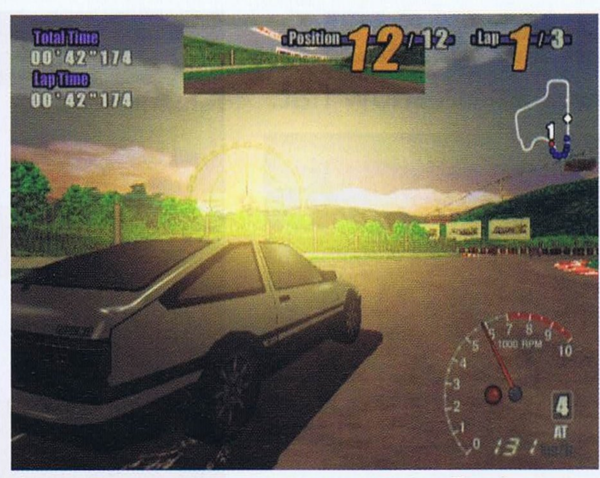
VERDICT

There's a seed of potential in the idea, but, as it is, this is a game of supreme linearity that quickly proves dull and unrewarding.





"Boredom crushes your very soul"



△ Green Field is the simplest of all the tracks and you'll need to do hardly any braking for the whole circuit. Nice. And. Dull.



△ Car models don't sustain any damage even when battered.



△ This view is the only one that gives an impression of speed.



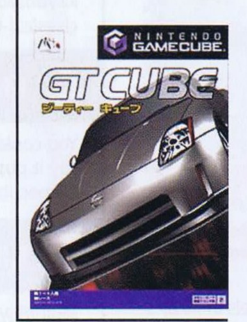
△ By pressing up on the controller you get this rear-view, which helps you keep an eye on any chasing opponents. Trouble is, it's all to easily accessed when you're simply driving around corners. This can be very irritating indeed.

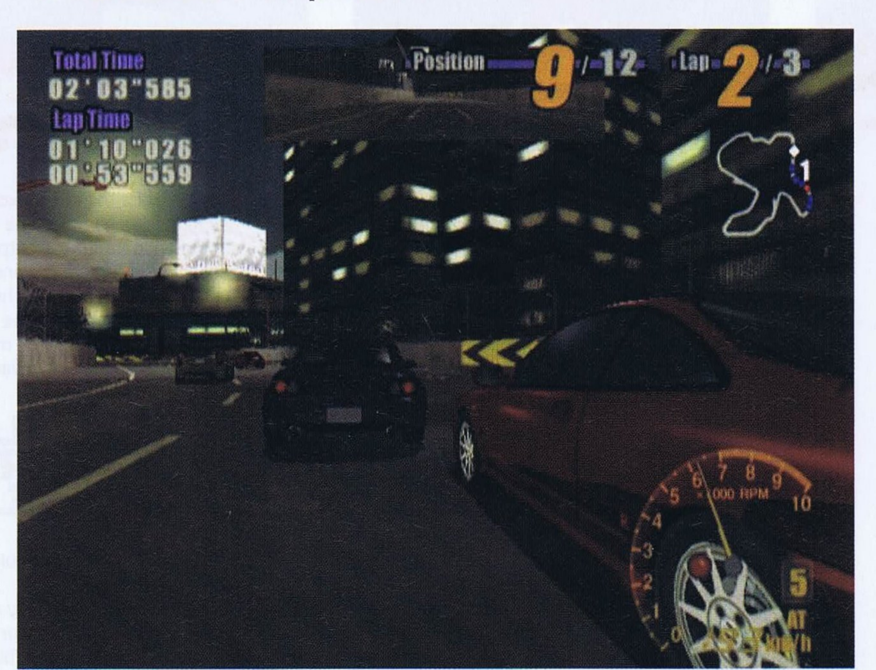
GT CUBE

A disappointing cel-shaded racer that wouldn't have looked out of place in 1995...

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	M2TO
DEVELOPER	M2TO
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW (JAP)
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£50-£60 ON IMPORT





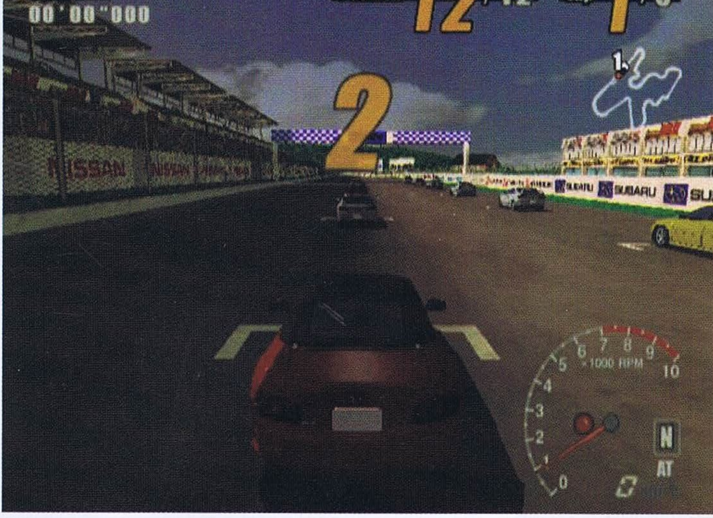
△ Your headlamps are pretty pathetic. Considering you've got your bonnet right up against that red car, there's nowt in the way of light. Come on Gamecube development mates – *try harder*...



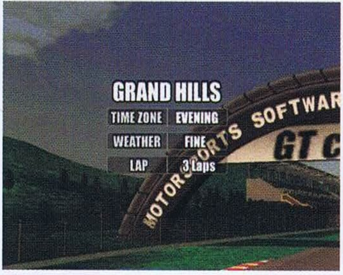
Auto Modellista is the obvious title to compare this one with – and the face-off's justified in some respects, most obviously because of the cel-shaded vehicles. However, while *Auto Modellista* is quite the feast for the eyes, *GT Cube* is, graphically speaking, pug-ugly. Even on a smart TV with S-Video connection, there's nothing here to inspire. The trackside objects are sparse and ropy-looking at best, while the vehicles themselves look bland, even in the replays (and, more often than not, those are the sections that make a racing game look suitably enticing). To be perfectly blunt, it looks cack.

GET A HANDLE ON IT

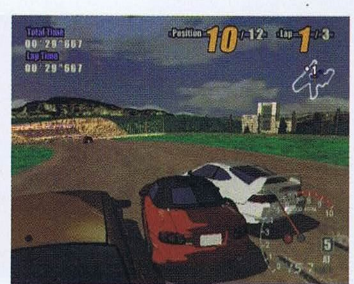
So, it's with some surprise, then, that we discovered a rather enjoyable racer underneath its ugly bodywork. Unlike *Auto Modellista, GT* actually handles very well indeed. Okay, so it's all very basic stuff – it feels rather arcadey, like *Ridge Racer*, for example – but it's accessible and, more importantly, entertaining to play. There's a massive



△ Time your revs correctly and you should get an extra boost at the start of the race.

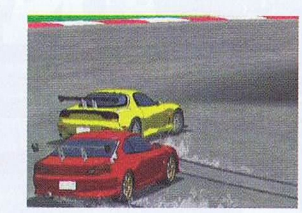


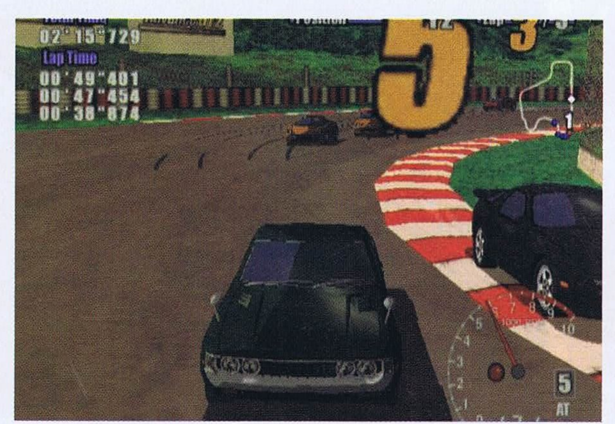
△ At the beginning of each race you're 'treated' to a fly-by of the course.



△ Once you've fought your way to the front the game gets very tedious indeed.



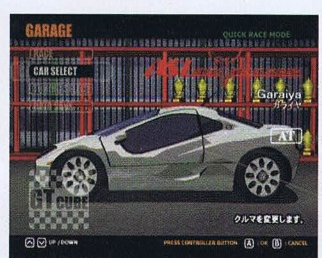




△ The opposition drivers aren't the most dynamic bunch in the world. They never mess up – even if you ram them at full pelt from the side.

TURN ON TUNE UP

Success earns you extra bonuses for your motors…



THE GARAGE

Not as customisable as in Modellista. In fact, not customisable at all, but you do see all your trophies on the shelves. It's from here that you upgrade your car.



THE SHOWROOM

There are loads of vehicles to choose from, ranging from the deathly slow to the super fast. There are even some lovely vintage Japanese cars to unlock.



KEEP TINKERING

You can customise pretty much every aspect of your favourite cars, from the colour to the kind of onboard CPU and suspension tyres you use…



WASTED EFFORT

…unfortunately, the difference it makes to the game is pretty negligible. Because the game's so easy, the extra touches of speed just make it even more tedious.

selection of vehicles (all of which come from Japanese manufacturers) and each handles differently enough from the others to make the extra cars you've unlocked worth investigating.

So, why the dodgy score in the bottom right hand corner, then? Well, despite being competent enough and enjoyable for a few – count 'em – hours, it really doesn't last. The robustness of the handling and the simplicity of control is soon its undoing.

"YOU'LL BE IN THE LEAD BY THE END OF THE FIRST LAP AND THERE YOU'LL STAY FOR THE REST OF THE RACE. ALL ON YOUR OWN"

EASY DRIVER

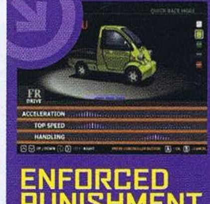
Playing through the game's Championship mode, you'll notice the that the opening sections are laughably easy. To begin with you only need to do one lap of each track, and every time you win – and believe us, it's quite tough *not* to – you only do so by a slim margin. You hope in vain that the game will throw a little more in the way of challenges at you, but by the time you've worked your way through the middle class, High Speed class and eventually the Professional class, you realise that, like an aging Hugh Hefner, the game doesn't really get any harder.

Sure, as you bump up another difficulty level you have to do a few more laps than last time, and yes, the game picks up speed, making it occasionally exhilarating. But more often than not, you'll be in the lead by the end of the first lap and there you'll stay for the rest of the race. All on your own. Four or five minutes in which boredom crushes your very soul.

In all fairness it's a respectable effort and there's some enjoyment to be had from it, but by today's standards, with the likes of *Gran Turismo* and *Burnout* offering far more challenge and control depth in their respective racing fields, this feels too simplistic and too dated to make any kind of lasting impression. Even on Gamecube, where there's very little in the way of competition, it's difficult to recommend this, especially given the price you have to pay to import it from Japan.

If you've already got *Burnout 2* then there's very little reason to consider this. In fact, there's none at all.

GERAINT EVANS



ENFORCED PUNISHMENT

There are times when you feel as though you're careering around at high speed. Unfortunately, every now and again you have to race in championships where you are forced to use a certain vehicle. More often than not these are painfully slow heaps like a Mitsubishi Colt or Dihatsu Midget, in which case the races are sooo sloooow that the game becomes a test of patience rather than skill.

+

- Loads to unlock.
- Short-term fun.
- Nice and accessible.



–

- Horrible presentation.
- Way too easy.
- Pretty soulless.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Burnout 2
Acclaim
NGC/80 90%
The best racer on Gamecube and a thrilling ride from start to finish.



5 VISUALS
Little merit at all. It can get pretty choppy at times too.

5 SOUNDS
Irritating engine noise and crazy J-pop/Hardcore tunes.

4 MASTERY
If someone told us it was an N64 game, we'd believe them.

5 LIFESPAN
Two days at the very most to unlock and see everything.

VERDICT

***GT Cube's* way too easy and way too basic to leave its mark on the racing game world, even if it is enjoyable for a little while.**





FIVE FOR A PRIZE!

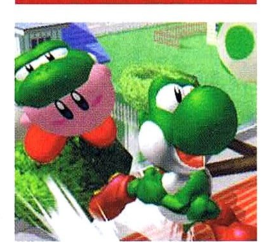
Of course, we could easily sit around all day making Top 5 lists, like crazed list-addict John Cusack. In fact, we often do. But, as ever, we want YOU to do the work now. You've seen the format over the past few months, so send in your own Top 5 lists, accompanied by **25 words** on each entry...

NGC ESSENTIAL

THE BEST CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY...

TOP FIVE 'CUBE DINOS

Scaly and usually green, and entirely extinct to boot, everyone loves dinosaurs. Which explains Marcus' overwhelming popularity. Boom. Boooom.



YOSHI



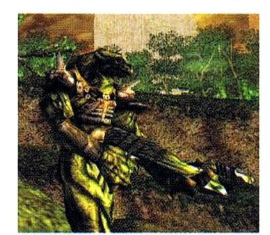
BOWSER



PRINCE TRICKY



GODZILLA



SLEG







1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

The babbling nonsense of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when "Nu Celda" finally hit the shelves. It's an interactive experience that's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some interminable sailing sections spoil it a bit, and it's pretty short, but this is as close as 'art' and 'games' have been yet.

NGC STAR GAME

2 METROID PRIME — 97





NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

A polished, addictive stunningly immersive adventure-cum-shooter-cum-platformer that will make you cry when it's over. Pushes the envelope in every field. Classic.

3 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96



NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Mazza's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island put there by an evil villain. With all the intuitiveness, polished visuals, and sense of pure fun of *Mario 64*, this pushes all the right buttons.

4 TIMESPLITTERS 2 — 92





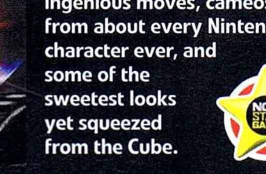
EIDOS ■ NGC/72

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *Timesplitters 2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre. Wick!

5 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE — 91







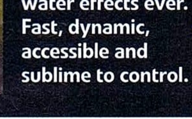
NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

Eye-singeing multiplayer, ingenious moves, cameos from about every Nintendo character ever, and some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube.

6 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM — 91





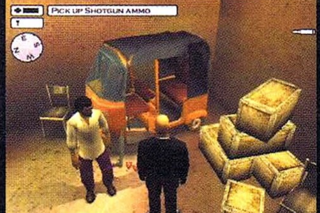


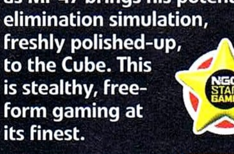
NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

Slight frame-rate problems in PAL, but *Blue Storm* is still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control.

7 HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN — 91







EIDOS ■ NGC/82

Tighten the fibre-wire and leave your morals at the door as Mr 47 brings his potent elimination simulation, freshly polished-up, to the Cube. This is stealthy, free-form gaming at its finest.

8 BURNOUT 2 — 90





ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

B2 takes the best bits of the first game – bum-clenching speed and bone-crunching collisions – and welds them onto more modes than you can eat. A brilliant series refinement.

9 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

90

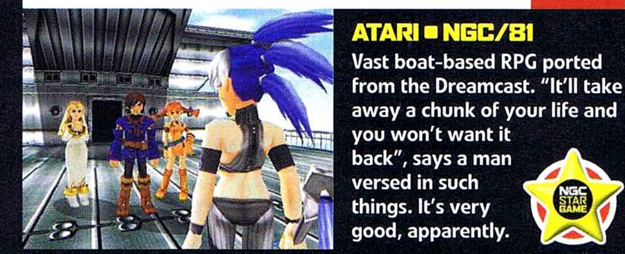
ATARI ■ NGC/78

Essentially *Gauntlet* with lots of numbers and menu screens, online *PSO* becomes an epic tale of crate-smashing, internet companionship, and fevered item collection. Blork!

NGC STAR GAME

10 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS

90



ATARI ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll take away a chunk of your life and you won't want it back", says a man versed in such things. It's very good, apparently.

NGC STAR GAME

11 RESIDENT EVIL

89



CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

The classic zombie–horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Controls are still crap, though.

12 ETERNAL DARKNESS


89

NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

A rollicking Lovecraftian yarn of ancient evils, *Eternal Darkness* replaces slick zombie-slaying action with a wonderfully creepy story told through a cast of 12 playable characters and a truly innovative magic system.

13 CONFLICT DESERT STORM

89



SCI ■ NGC/80

If there's no war on and you're getting withdrawal symptoms, why not try this exemplary soldier sim? Tense and teeth-gritting, with a great tactical co-op mode. Brain-based fun for those nuclear winter evenings.

14 SPLINTER CELL

89



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81

Starring Sam Fisher, a man with three green glowing eyeballs and powerful thigh muscles. Clanciverse stealth-fest with a gritty 'realistic' feel and the opportunity to operate various Clancy-approved hi-tech gizmos.

15 LUIGI'S MANSION
88

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

With Mazza incarcerated in a haunted house by you-know-who, brother Luigi ushered in the year of the Cube in with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. It's a little bit short, but still ace.

16 SUPER MONKEY BALL
88

ATARI ■ NGC/67

Ingenious simian-flavoured update of *Marble Madness*. Chuck in a monkey *Mario Kart*, pool, golf and 'springy boxing' and you've got one of the weirdest, most wonderful Gamecube games out there. Great stuff.

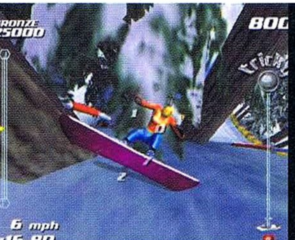
17 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER

87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

Rogue Leader bolts eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky-smooth space battles to produce the most memorable – and certainly the best-looking – Star Wars game yet. Well done, Lucas.

18 SSX TRICKY
87



EA ■ NGC/69

Has PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but still works wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, shortcuts and secrets and some mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

19 LOST KINGDOMS II
87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70

CCG-ing comes to the Cube in this accomplished RPG, in which you collect cards and battle mythical monsters in pretty fantasy landscapes. Might not sound like much, but *Lost Kingdoms* is far more than the sum of its parts.

20 DEF JAM VENDETTA
87



MAJESCO ■ NGC/82

Wrestling thumpfest featuring all your favourite hip-hop artistes from 'the block'. Bone-crunching moves, booty with all that, and some 'sick' beats. But where are Flava Flav and Easy-E? Chekkit!

TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS
A cute-looking turn-based strategy game it may be, but underneath is a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging masterpiece that'll hook anyone experiencing it. Frankly, one of the best games we've played.

2 METROID FUSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found here. A sprawling environment littered with baddies and an imposing difficulty level. It has a great link-up feature with *Prime* too.

3 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This slightly tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever. Stone-cold classic.

4 YOSHI'S ISLAND
Stunning level design, fiendish puzzles and secrets all topped off with some beautiful pastel-shaded visuals. Another essential 2D platformer for GBA.



5 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em in to battle – but it remains the most entertaining RPG out there…

6 SUPER MARIO KART ADVANCE
Much like the superb SNES original: burn around multi-coloured tracks dishing out justice with weapons.



7 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player experience.

8 BROKEN SWORD
Perfect for those long journeys. A gripping storyline, sharp, sarcastic dialogue, some sweet visuals and a more efficient control system.

9 CASTLEVANIA HARMONY OF DISSONANCE
More accessible than its previous GBA outing, this is classic *'Vania*. Imaginative bosses, a steep challenge and very atmospheric.

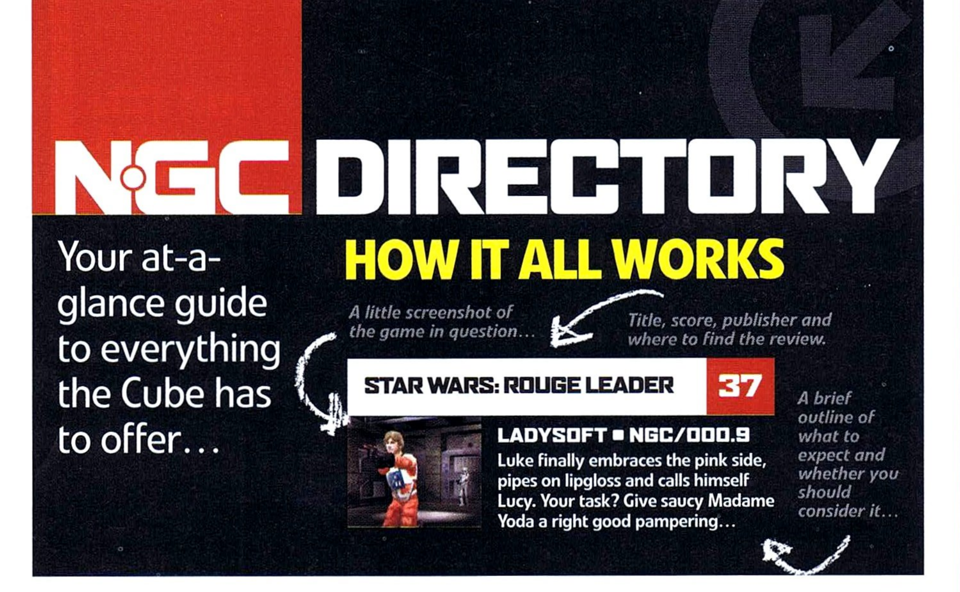


10 GRADIUS ADVANCE
The best shooter on GBA, and it's doubtful many will ever get close. Classic *Gradius* gameplay, with innovative levels and fantastic bosses.

NGC DIRECTORY

Your at-a-glance guide to everything the Cube has to offer…

HOW IT ALL WORKS



18 WHEELER PRO AMERICAN TRUCKER — 48



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/68
Drive your truck from A to B and avoid 'smokey'. A bit like *Out Run* with 'rigs', but the arcade version with the sit-in cabinet was better.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP — 30



EA ■ NGC/69
About as much fun as being told your parents have been crushed to death in a horrific car crash. And then contracting Weil's Disease.

ACE GOLF — 74



EIDOS ■ NGC/74
A highly enjoyable, relaxing sticksie-ball game that treads a pleasant middle-ground between fun and serious.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE — 81



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Gentle *Tony Hawk's* alterno-clone – this time you're skating around massive arenas, 'busting' tricks on a pair of them there 'roller-boots'.

ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2 — 70



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/77
Wave Race on land with bouncy farming utility vehicles. Competent enough, but there's plenty of superior racing fare out there.

BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE — 80



VIVENDI ■ NGC/ 81
Dungeon-slashing adventurising with less numbers and beards and a special two-player flavour added to the mix. Actually quite good.

BARBARIAN — 70



VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
A button-mashing fantasy battler complete with fully-smashable arenas. Fun for a while – but it's not as good as *Smash Bros.*

BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW — 15



KEMCO ■ NGC/ 81
Bats stars in Gamecube's most arse-clenchingly bad title to date. And it's not even funny-bad. Clunky, dull, gameplay-free superheroics.

BATMAN VENGEANCE — 70



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Cel-shaded platforming cartoon bat-action. One of the first Cube games that came out – but it's looking pretty ropy already.

BEACH SPIKERS — 79



ATARI ■ NGC/72
Volleyball, as played on sand. Brilliantly addictive with four players, but the single-player's longevity lets the side down.

BIG AIR FREESTYLE — 28



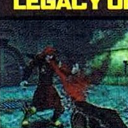
ATARI ■ NGC/75
Yet another awful off-road bike title. The kind of game that makes you want to cry the second you've started playing. Don't bother.

BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS — 71



EMPIRE ■ NGC/83
A cross between *Elite* and Smokey and The Bandit, but with The Reynolds replaced by stinking wall-eyed stereotypical hillbillies. Nice.

BLOOD OMEN 2 LEGACY OF KAIN — 72



EIDOS ■ NGC/77
Gamecube's other undead hack-fest. After 1,000 years of slumber, evil vampire lord Kain is awake and hungry. Breakfast, anyone?

BLOOD RAYNE — 65



VIVENDI ■ NGC/79
Vampire fun. Dismember Nazis, fire a staggering array of period weaponry, and battle an *evil priest* driving an *armoured pulpit*. Yup.

BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY — 74



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68
Competent-enough morphing-into-animals fighting shenanigans, but *Capcom vs SNK* and *Mortal Kombat* have since surpassed it.

BMX XXX — 48

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Childish, boring BMX game featuring pneumatically-enhanced strippers showing you their nipples. Get a girlfriend instead.

TOP FIVE WAYS TO PRESERVE CORPSES

PICKLE 'EM
From morticians' favourite formalin to the old-fashioned naval method of stuffing the dead chap in a barrel of rum for the voyage home, pickling is tried and trusted. And tasty too!

CRYOGENICS
A deep-freeze technique beloved by freaks who can't bear to think the world might just cope without them. Drawbacks: one powercut and you've got a rapidly-thawing egotist to dispose of.

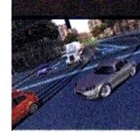
IN A PEAT BOG
The acid water weakens or even dissolves bone but preserves skin and hair – for centuries!

DRYING
Happens accidentally in desert or mountain burials – a very dry location and adequate drainage all combine to produce a dessicated dead 'un.

MAKE A MUMMY
Not as successful as other techniques, but no other way of preserving your dead has the glamour of Egyptian-style bandages and tar. Or involves shoving a bendy bit of wire up the nose to pulp and scoop out the brain.

Ginger from the **Egyptian Galleries** at **the British Museum** wins a blanket to cover his poor, dried-out old bones.

BOMBERMAN GENERATIONS — 70



VIVENDI ■ NGC/76
Yet another update of the venerable arson franchise. Single-player is enjoyable if a little tedious; four-player is as addictive as it ever was.

BURNOUT — 86



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
With bone-splintering, spectacular crashes and twitchy, inch-perfect handling, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.

CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO — 79



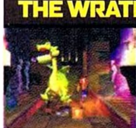
CAPCOM ■ NGC/72
A great game, but purist retro freaks will want to fork out for one of those enormous, clunky arcade sticks to get the most from it…

CASTLEWEEN — 16



WANADOO ■ NGC/ 81
Unfairly difficult dismal platforming tedium with some kind of cartoony black magic schtick going on. *Crash Bandicoot's* idjut brother.

CEL DAMAGE — 60



EA ■ NGC/66
Silly cel-shaded car-combat game in the vein of violent Warner Bros cartoons. Far too manic and confusing for its own good.

CRASH BANDICOOT THE WRATH OF CORTEX — 40



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
One of the worst ports we've seen – and of a game that was a stinking load of crap to begin with, too! Avoid like death himself.

CRAZY TAXI — 70



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Ancient title that's so old it's now been included as one of the minigames in *GTAIII*. Creaky graphics, but still good fun.

DAKAR 2 — 79



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80
Driving around in a vast expanse of dirt, all on your own, for days on end? *Dakar 2* somehow manages to make this into pretty good fun.

DARK SUMMIT — 51



THQ ■ NGC/69
Think *SSX Tricky* but with all the speed, style and entertainment removed with near-surgical precision. A waste of time.

DAVE MIRRA 2 FREESTYLE BMX — 75

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Pornography-free moto-cross game that's actually good. Slick, smooth with big arenas – but this will only appeal to the BMX hardcore.

DIE HARD VENDETTA 80



VIVENDI ■ NGC/74
Wear a vest and shoot holes in people who look like terrorists, so America can enjoy one more night of guiltless slumber. Sweary.

DEAD TO RIGHTS 60



EA ■ NGC/83
What if Max Payne had an evil attack dog? Mindless third-person ultraviolence. JACK SLATE is PISSED OFF and wants to HURT SOMEONE!

DEFENDER 50



MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Rather pointless 3D update that makes one of the hardest-core arcade classics really easy, and by extension, depressingly dull.

DISNEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR 26



DISNEY ■ NGC/73
A cruel form of torture as The Mouse patronises his way through this hideous 'adventure'. Almost Beckettian in its non-eventfulness.

DISNEY SPORTS BASKETBALL 55



KONAMI ■ NGC/82
Strip away the franchised exterior and it's another pointlessly simple Sports title. Soon to follow: *Disney Sports Russian Roulette*.

DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL 69



KONAMI ■ NGC/76
Oddly enough, this isn't anywhere near as bad as you may think. It's an amusing, simple footie game, ideal for younger gamers.

DISNEY SPORTS SKATEBOARDING 64



KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The Mouse and his irritating friends have a crack at busting tricks on half-pipes. Walt must be spinning in his cryogenic storage-pod by now.

DONALD DUCK GOIN' QUACKERS 32

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/68
A bit like *Crash Bandicoot*, except with The Duck in charge, wearing a sailor's costume and going bthackakackthh. Also total rubbish.

DOSHIN THE GIANT 62



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Quirky title that puts you in charge of a giant schizophrenic yellow man who must help/hinder indigenous islanders. A little short-lived.

DR MUTO 70

MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Amusing mad-doctor platforming game where you have to mutate into different animals to solve puzzles. Science is fun after all!

TOP FIVE WHEEL-CHAIRS



DAVROS'
The Daleks' creator's wheelchair is a must-have for any disabled villian, packed with top-notch gadgets. It can hover too. So why didn't the fool enable his Daleks to do that, eh? Solve the stairs problem, wouldn't it? Some evil genius he was. No wonder some scarf-wearing space gypo could defeat him every time.

STEVEN HAWKING'S
The smartest man in the world's wheelchair can actually talk for him. Give it a couple of years and he'll probably have one that can dress him and clean his teeth. And *hover*, Davros…

PROFESSOR XAVIER'S
Not the one from the films but the smooth yellow one from the cartoon, which makes a rather satisfying 'voooom' noise.

BLOFELD'S
Seen at the begining of the James Bond film For Your Eyes Only, this came with controls for directing a helicopter. Shame Bond dropped it down a hole. And it couldn't hover.

MY GRAND-MOTHER'S
Robert says "it contains no special equipment or fun gadgets but it's still fun to play with in the supermarket car park". Yes, but what do you do with your poor gran while you're out playing with her wheelie?

Robert Thompson of St Ives wins something from our Big Box O' Stuff. Nothing with wheels in there, mind. Unless we decide to send a wheel, natch.

DRIVEN 60

BAM ■ NGC/68
Very basic, very short game of the appalling film about driving fast in a large circle. Filling up bargain bins worldwide as we speak.

EGGO MANIA 49



KEMCO ■ NGC/72
Rubbish take on *Tetris* that, mystifyingly, involves ovulations. Wouldn't look out of place on an Amiga. Pointless in every way.

ENTER THE MATRIX 73

ATARI ■ NGC/ 81
Take the red pill and find out how vaguely disappointing this movie tie-in is. After all the hype we were expecting something really special.

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002 37



KONAMI ■ NGC/67
Winter sports game combining tiresome button-mashing antics with equally dull timing and precision exercises. Dull.

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING 78



KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Snazzy-looking *Hawk's* clone, but then, as they said in the old Galaxy ads, why have cotton when you can have silk? Or something like that.

EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING 23



KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Fight bad guys while sliding down a mountain on a tray. Somehow even worse than *Dark Summit*. Games like these should be made illegal.

EXTREME G 3 85



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
A bit of an underrated gem, *XG 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge, tracks, some ingenious weaponry and eye-spanking visuals.

F1 2002 67



EA ■ NGC/71
Rock-hard racing simulator your dad will enjoy. Also features humourless German driving robot M Schumacher version 1.0.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE 81



EA ■ NGC/83
Densely packed representation of the glamorous world of F1 team management. At least it lets you take the cars for a spin as well.

FIFA 2003 83



EA ■ NGC/75
EA finally remember how good football games are made. Actually a bit better than *ISS 2*. Need we say it's also a vast improvement?

FIREBLADE 59



MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
Nondescript brain-free helicopter game that will appeal to military memorabilia-collecting psychos and likers of bad '80s Vietnam 'movies'.

FROGGER BEYOND 59



KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The current trend of 'improving' ancient games by making them 3D taken to its most extreme conclusion. Functional gaming.





DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever... rated!

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY — 25



MIDWAY ■ NGC/68

We'd be far more comfortable with this travesty if we'd had it inserted rectally. An insult to the legacy of a venerable arcade classic.

GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE — 68



ATARI ■ NGC/74

Lots of good stompy, building-smashing monster fun in multiplayer mode, but otherwise a little weak. Get *Smash Bros* instead.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS — 78



EA ■ NGC/75

Attractive and competent enough adaptation of Potter's film – but rather easy with it. Only die-hard speccy wizard fans need apply.

HOT WHEELS: VELOCITY X — 45



THQ ■ NGC/75

Basic racing/car-combat game based on plastic toys. Perhaps even coded in basic. Strictly for the very, very young. Or very stupid.

HULK — 65



VIVENDI ■ NGC/82

Get angry, turn green, and, yes, SMASH your way through levels of puny soldiers. Also stealth with the rather more boring Bruce Banner.

IKARUGA — 85

ATARI ■ NGC/ 80

Classically old-style shooter – originally designed for robots, now available for human consumption. *Ikaruga* is very, very, very hard.

ISS 2 — 83



KONAMI ■ NGC/68

A winning formula mystifyingly tarnished with unnecessary 'improvements'. Still good – but also a step backwards.

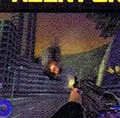
ISS 3 — 78



KONAMI ■ NGC/82

The once-invincible football series sinks ever lower with a misguided new 'close-up' mode. And still no sign of *Winning Eleven 6* for Europe.

JAMES BOND 007 AGENT UNDER FIRE — 70



EA ■ NGC/70

Slog around workaday gameplay in off-the-peg shooter upholstery, shooting baddies with ping-pong balls. Strangely unsatisfying.

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE — 72



EA ■ NGC/75

The best Bond game on GC so far – and done with some flair – but tasty visuals can't hide an FPS that's a little lacking overall.

JEDI KNIGHT II — 67



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75

A seriously disappointing PC conversion of an overrated shooter. Huge game, but quite tedious. Does little to improve on *Dark Forces*.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD — 20



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69

Like a horrible nightmare about doing cross-country wearing nothing but steel-wool pants and barbed-wire flip-flops.

JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS — 18

THQ ■ NGC/78

Tedious, sorry, devoid-of-inspiration 'puzzle' game ('Y'know – for kids!') that actually manages to out–borify *Universal Studios*.



TOP FIVE THINGS TO GROW

PIKMIN

Plant-type things that help you achieve your aim – of, erm, growing plant-type things. Apart from the white ones, which are Sick And Wrong.

PUMPKINS

Easy to grow, these plants devour your entire garden in mere weeks. The Godzilla of the vegetable world.

UP

Don't do it too fast, but do remember to do it at some point. (Yes, this includes YOU, Geraint, you eternal boy-child.)

MOULD

Simplicity itself. Just leave something edible in the fridge or behind the sofa and hey presto! Your own interesting microbiology project.

SEA MONKEYS

Stunt-loving water-dwelling shrimp-things grown from fragrant animal seeds. True.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER — 75



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/73

Same old nutritious trick-based extreme-sports diet as usual, but this time in tubes made of water. Actually quite good fun, for a while.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 — 79



EA ■ NGC/75

If the more arcadey nature of *Rocky* doesn't sit all that well with you, then it's worth giving this face-smashing simulator a go.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING — 47



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69

The gimmick of bringing back old-skool 'rasslers' is nowhere near enough to make this any good. A shambolic licensing cash-cow.

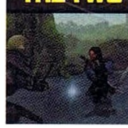
LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II — 50



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76

Practically the same game as above. Yet another travesty of a wrestling game, made only marginally better thanks to the likes of Big Daddy.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS — 68



EA ■ NGC/78

Repetitive hacking game with faint RPG overtones. Guide your man through endless levels making goblin prosciutto and orc sausages.

LOST KINGDOMS — 86



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70

Collect, er, cards, and battle mythical monsters with them in pretty fantasy landscapes. The sequel does is a bit better, though.

MARIO PARTY 4 — 68



NINTENDO ■ NGC/75

Disappointing stuff. It's not bad if you're in the mood for boardgame party fun, but it's done very little to improve on the originals.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2 — 70



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75

Another decent-enough extreme sports sim. A bit slicker than *Dave Mirra*, but with smaller, tighter arenas. Does the job.

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE — 74



EA ■ NGC/75

Saving Private Ryan-style FPS set during World War II. Looks rather ropey in places, but it's atmospheric and highly enjoyable.

MEGA MAN NETWORK TRANSMISSION — 59



CAPCOM ■ NGC/84

Here's an idea: take a great GBA game, strip all the good bits out and put the resulting lame platformer on GC. Yeah, that's *brilliant*.

DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!



MEN IN BLACK II ALIEN ESCAPE — 45



ATARI ■ NGC/78
Rubbish off-the-peg third-person shooting game of the rubbish off-the-peg movie sequel. Did we say it was rubbish?

MICRO MACHINES — 57



ATARI ■ NGC/78
Like the recipe for bread or wine gums, *Micro Machines* doesn't change much, and this iteration is certainly no exception.

MINORITY REPORT — 39



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
Astonishingly brutal third-rate ass-whupping game that takes place on the sets of a Spielberg movie. Utterly, relentlessly violent.

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE — 80



MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
The best *Kombat* yet! The spine-ripping, blood-feasting yarn finally gets the update it deserves on Gamecube. Finish him!

MX SUPERFLY — 63



THQ ■ NGC/73
An MX game that handles like you're driving space bikes on the surface of the moon. The best of a very bad bunch, though.

MYSTIC HEROES — 71



THQ ■ NGC/75
Simplistic, repetitive 3D *Gauntlet*-style slash-'em-up that's somehow strangely entertaining and charming. Well, Geraint thinks so.

NBA 2K3 — 85



ATARI ■ NGC/79
A titan of a basketball game that puts all others to shame. Great gameplay complements a brilliantly engrossing Career mode.

NBA COURTSIDE 2002 — 79



NINTENDO ■ NGC/68
The second-best basketball sim available, but it's still lacking somewhat. Strictly for hardcore fans of the Ball of B.

NBA LIVE 2003 — 70



EA ■ NGC/75
The predictable common-or-garden yearly EA update. Solid gameplay; lots and lots of lovely numbers; not much different from last year.

NBA STREET VOL 2 — 88

EA ■ NGC/85
A cracking basketball game that almost negates the need for realistic sports sims. And all for half the price of real basketball trainers.

TOP FIVE WAHS

WARIO
Wah by name (well, sort of) and WAAAAAAAAH by nature. With the yellow-clad body of a pie-eating champ and a truly florid complexion, when it comes to Wah, he's the weeeener.

WAH-WAH PEDAL
Fuel for the Grange Hill theme tune and the soundtrack to every 1970s 'grot' film in existence, this attachment for your geetar gets its name from the sound it makes – a big, red-nosed musical WAH!

WALUIGI
He lacks the impressive physique of Wario, and Waluigi is also sadly lacking on the vocal front, managing a ratty sort of "wah" rather than the rotund one's exuberant wah-cry. A wiener indeed.

RED PANDA
Looking like a raccoon with sunburn and wearing an expression of utter bewilderment, this ridiculous-looking creature is also called a wah. But don't ask us what it's good for.

DO-WAH-DIDDY
If 1970s pop act Showaddywaddy aren't remembered for anything else, this they will be remembered for this song. Which is lucky for them, 'cos they aren't remembered for anything else.

NEED FOR SPEED 2 HOT PURSUIT — 69

EA ■ NGC/74
Ironically slow, sluggish, speed-free racer. Yet another lazy port that's ruined what was originally a pretty entertaining franchise.

NFL 2K3 — 86



ATARI ■ NGC/79
A meaty gridiron sim that's a real threat to the *Madden* franchise. Bags of management roughage don't detract from the gameplay.

NHL 2003 — 64



EA ■ NGC/75
A more realistic approach to ice hockey which, while decent enough, isn't particularly fast or – more importantly – fun.

NHL 2K3 — 72



ATARI ■ NGC/80
Massively complicated ice hockey title, with stodgy and unwieldy gameplay. In a similar vein to *NFL 2K3*, but doesn't quite pull it off.

NHL HITZ 20-02 — 79



MIDWAY ■ NGC/67
Exaggerated ice hockey title in a similar vein to Midway's *Red Card*, where the sticks aren't just there for hitting the puck.

NHL HITZ 20-03 — 65



MIDWAY ■ NGC/74
Another year, another dose of frantic ice action. Still better than EA's take on the game – not much cop on the original, mind.

PAC-MAN WORLD 2 — 70



EA ■ NGC/78
The Pac is back for some hilarious retro-themed platforming fun. Shamelessly pilfers absolutely everything from *Mario 64*.

PIKMIN — 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
Created using textures from Shigsy's own garden. A wonderful real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetable men.

P.N.03 — 77



CAPCOM ■ NGC/84
This super-stylish shooter is only marred by dull bosses and design. But why *does* heroine Vanessa pull off those dance moves?

PRO RALLY 2002 — 58

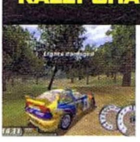


UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
An okay game completely and ruthlessly dragged down by its thoroughly awful, frustrating handling. Leave well alone.

PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR — 48

KONAMI ■ NGC/74
The only tennis game on Gamecube so far, but with rubbish non-analogue controls and some distinctly whiffy visuals.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP — 74



SCI ■ NGC/78
Surprisingly solid, does nearly all the things a rallying game should. Should do the job until *Colin McCrae* finally sees the light of day.

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC — 84



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/78
The limbless floppy-haired French Freak™ has the last laugh with a Rayman game that, insists our correspondent, is actually good.

RED CARD 20-03 — 78



MIDWAY ■ NGC/71
Violent football game where you mince opponents with stud and fist until the meat shows. Should be called *Roy Keane's Red Card 20-03*.

REIGN OF FIRE — 59



BAM ■ NGC/76
A poor game of an equally poor film, even if you do get to burn stuff. Some nice ideas ruined by dodgy physics and controls.

RED FACTION II — 66



THQ ■ NGC/82
Shoot decadent capitalist scum in the face, and maybe blow some holes in walls too, in this distinctly average brown fighting game.

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85



CAPCOM ■ NGC/ 78
Resi Zero ditches the old solo formula for a two-character system. Great set-pieces, looks lovely… it's more *Resi*, basically.

RESIDENT EVIL 2 — 62



CAPCOM ■ NGC/81
Experience the shambling, undead terror of original PSone graphics! Revisit Leon, Claire and their blocky unwashed friends for just… £30?!

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS — 65



CAPCOM ■ NGC/ 81
Braaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa aaaaaaaaaaaaaaiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinnnn nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn sssssssssssssssssssssss! Etcetera.

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY — 77

TDK ■ NGC/77
Stompy king-size robots go to war in the game of the crazy Japanese cartoon franchise. Not bad at all, as far as stompy robot games go.



DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

ROCKY — 78



RAGE ■ NGC/74
A solid fighter where you guide Rockies one through five to punching greatness. Great two-player, loads of unlockable extras.

SCOOBY DOO NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS! — 36





THQ ■ NGC/74
Platforming non-action that will hold your interest no longer than half an hour, or until you need to go to the toilet; whichever comes first.

THE SCORPION KING — 30



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Bad. Very bad. Guide a poor approximation of The Rock around and hit bad guys over and over until they bleed from the eyeholes.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM — 67



ATARI ■ NGC/74
Another cartoonish footie game with a major interest in violence and OTT moves. Cracking in multiplayer – poor on your own.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE — 52



EA ■ NGC/68
A really quite bad *Crazy Taxi* rip-off, with various Simpsons characters bolted on, spewing repetitive 'funny' one-liners.

THE SIMS — 81



EA ■ NGC/79
Highly addictive people simulating comes to the Cube. A great sense of humour and endless potential for interior decoration and/or mischief.

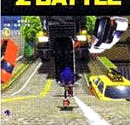


SMUGGLER'S RUN WARZONES — 78



ROCKSTAR ■ NGC/73
Impressive, hee-uge landscapes and fast-paced 'racing' in buggies and jeeps are let down by repetitive gameplay and awful robot music.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE — 70



ATARI ■ NGC/67
Sega's annoying mascot on Gamecube, now with an extra dimension added for some reason. Does anyone care anymore?

SONIC ADVENTURE DX DIRECTOR'S CUT — 38



ATARI ■ NGC/83
A GBA link-up feature for the Cube, but otherwise a straight port of a game that was already rubbish to begin with. Enough is enough.

SPEED KINGS — 57



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/83
Wannabe *Burnout* with motorised velocipedes and, strangely, lots of sliding under lorries involved. Otherwise bland and unnecessary.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION — 70



ATARI ■ NGC/79
If you have a hopeless retro arcade problem, you could do worse: seven Sonic games on one disc, accurate down to even the loading times!

SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE — 72



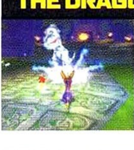
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/69
Dodgy control and camera issues are the only problems with this enjoyable platform adventure. Voiced by the original cast, too.

SPY HUNTER — 55



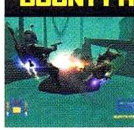
MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
Appaling frame-rate, nasty course design and dull linear racing make this one to avoid. Yet another pointless, crappy remake.

SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY — 40



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Much like *Crash Bandicoot*, this is another shoddy port of a game that was never really much fun in the first place.

STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER — 68



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
The panting, pot-bellied, totally rubbish space-assassin gets the *Tomb Raider* treatment in this distinctly average game.

STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS — 71



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Enjoyable *Battlezone*-style tank blaster set around Episode II – not quite as good as *Rogue Leader*, but still fun all the same.

TOP FIVE MEXICAN SNACKS

NACHOS
Tortilla chips, salsa and cheese. How can it go wrong?

GUACAMOLE
Not bad this. Yeah. Bit green, mind. And it stinks! Tastes okay, though. If you shut your eyes.

ENCHILADAS
Big tortilla, filled with beans, chicken or beef, baked in salsa. Essentially, Latin American canneloni. But muy tasty.

FAJITAS
Pronounced 'faheetas'. Not 'fajeetas', and definitely not 'fajitarz'. Got that? Good. Now you can order them with certainty and pride and scoff at lesser mortals' pitiful attempts at Spanish.

TEQUILA
From the heart of the cactus, something that'll give your poor liver a real spiking.

STARFOX ADVENTURES — 72



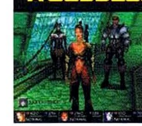
NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Disappointing adventure that's way too easy and linear. Not awful, but should have been far better. Hardly a fitting send-off for Rare, either.

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS — 25



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/76
One of the most technically inept games we've ever played. Clancy says bury the copies in the Arizona desert before anyone notices.

SUMMONER A GODDESS REBORN — 68



THQ ■ NGC/79
As much levelling-up and numbers floating out of people's heads that you can eat. Crappy visuals, but a sprawling, engrossing adventure.

SUPER BUBBLE POP — 65



JALECO ■ NGC/78
Kind of *Tetris*-y flavoured *Bust-a-Move* for the Sunny Delight generation, with chemically-induced visuals and music. Wick.

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS — 60



ATARI ■ NGC/ 81
Supes redeems himself somewhat with this serviceable, stylised and, most importantly, maze-free effort based on the animated cartoons.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 — 82



ATARI ■ NGC/78
The apes are back with levels even harder of core, and a mental new story mode involving love, betrayal and heinous banana-theft.

SX SUPERSTAR — 71



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/83
Fairly unassuming Moto-Cross scrambling, interestingly enhanced with a *Def Jam*-style Career mode than involves girlfriend upgrades.

TARZAN FREERIDE — 59



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Disney. Platformer. Do we really need to say any more? Workaday, jungle-based gameplay with the Seventh Earl of Greystoke.

TAZ WANTED — 52



ATARI ■ NGC/72
Some of the worst level design we've ever seen in this middling, frustrating cel-shaded *Mario*-wannabe platformer.

TETRIS WORLDS — 38



THQ ■ NGC/73
THQ manage to ruin one of the Best Games Ever by trying to make it 'better'. Again. Will anyone stop these people before it's too late?



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003 — 82

EA ■ NGC/75
The world most efficient golf robot gets his own game. Actually really good, in a surprisingly arcadey way. Nice graphics, too.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON — 66

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/79
Clancy has yet another go at squad-based tactical ops, and this time things run a little bit more smoothly. Entertaining stuff.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 — 87

ACTIVISION NGC/67
Mental grinds and stunts backed up by a mountain of hidden extras and vast skate parks – if you haven't tried *Hawk's*, now's the time.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 — 85

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
No time limits (hurrah!) and some great RPG elements and minigames complement the larger areas in *TH4* – a well-tweaked fourquel.

TOP ANGLER — 35

XICAT ■ NGC/81
Generic fishing game, predictably involving bass, that doesn't even get the basics of its limited genre right. Somewhat tiresome.

TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONES — 71

VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
Tail-riding, wingman-being movie-based flyboy antics. GC's only flight 'sim' – pretty challenging, but we recommend you try it first.

TUROK EVOLUTION — 71

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/73
Relatively disappointing dino-hunting FPS sequel. Not as bad as *Turok 3* on the N64, but serious niggles let the series down badly.

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER — 60

EA ■ NGC/76
As average a platformer as you'll find, with an Antipodean twist. It's a solid example of the genre but nothing more or less.

UFC THROWDOWN — 51

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/73
Highly amusing freestyle thump-fest, where you lead your oily, grunting man to victory in some vague Greek-style athletic contest.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS — 24

KEMCO ■ NGC/67
Anyone who makes a game that has you picking up rubbish deserves to be shot in the kneecaps, stuffed into a suitcase and hurled into the sea.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK

CAR MAINTENANCE
"If you're driving in your car and you hear an unfamiliar noise, simply drive for another 30 miles and then it's a familiar one – job done!"

NEW MOTOR?
"Got a new car and want to look cool in it? Well, make sure you know where the door handle is. Neglect this and when you arrive at your posh destination everyone will see you fumbling around trying to get out – not cool."

MOTORBIKE AND SIDECAR
"The exposure to the elements of a bike and the lack of manoeuvrability of a car, together at last. Numpties, all of 'em."

MOTORING ECONOMICS 1
"Want to save money on windscreen wipers? When it rains, simply drive with your head out of the window."

MOTORING ECONOMICS 2
"Spending too much on petrol? Just ensure you live uphill from wherever you want to go, and roll there. Then at the end of the day, remove a wire and call the AA."

Sense Master Paul Edwards wants your Sense Talks, mate! Send them to him at paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

V-RALLY 3 — 68

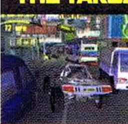
ATARI ■ NGC/82
Speedy rallying game that wouldn't be so much of a terrible drag if they could have concentrated on the basics first. Like, er, the steering.

WARIO WORLD — 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/83
The drunken, purple-nosed anti-Mario gets his own game at last. A funtastic, surreal frenzy of lowbrow humour and monster-hitting. Waah!

VIRTUA STRIKER 3 V2002 — 55

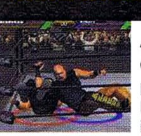
ATARI ■ NGC/69
Nice to look at, horrible to play. Rubbish AI and unwieldy controls make for a crap game of footie. Did we say it looked nice?

WORMS BLAST — 63

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
Annelids go to war (again). Kinda like *Bust-a-Move* in a puzzly-action kind of way, except this isn't anywhere near as good.

WRECKLESS THE YAKUZA MISSIONS — 51

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Drive around like a lunatic and smash up cars and everything else that gets in your way. Sub-*Burnout* road-accident nonsense.

WWE CRUSH HOUR — 43
THQ ■ NGC/83
Those magnificent greasy fighting men climb aboard magnificent greasy fighting machines for some unlikely *Vigilante 8*-style 'thrills'.

WWE WRESTLEMANIA X8 — 70

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Okay wrestler, but with nothing particularly new and a way-too-familiar engine. Still, if you must insist in buying these things…

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION — 55

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Duller than dishwater. Fighting-by-numbers stuff that offers very little of interest. Total waste of a pretty cool licence, too.

X-MEN 2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE — 64

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/82
Is he a man? Is he a wolf? Is he a genetically engineered awol super-soldier with hillbilly hair? Stodgy fighting with the clawed X-Man.

ZOOCUBE — 50

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/71
Insane puzzle game involving a rotating mouth that sucks animal genitals and goes 'moo', 'oink', 'roar', 'quack' and sometimes 'wah!'



GEAR

Uh-oh, uh-oh, uh-oh, uh-oh;
Uh-oh, uh-oh; here comes the tat now!
Uh-oh, uh-oh, uh-oh, uh-oh, etc.

WHAT IS A BEST BUY?

Well, you know when you're standing in your local game shop, dazzled by the array of gleaming peripherals and thumbing your pennies and notes with your clammy, nervous fingers? It's an indication of which item you should reach for before clutching it to your belly and presenting it to the store's cashier.

NGC BEST BUY





CUBICON

FROM MAD CATZ ● £8 ● WWW.MADCATZ.COM

Despite sounding like some sort of recently discovered sub-atomic particle, the Cubicon is just another third-party joypad. This particular model is made from a pleasingly tough see-through plastic with rubberised grips, and is big enough to find favour with anyone who thinks even the Xbox controller is just a little bit small and fiddly. It has a macro function for pre-recording special moves in beat-'em-ups, which is good if you can get it working. But on the model we tested, the analogue stick always leaned to the right. Rendering it useless.

NOT AS GOOD AS...



PRO PAD
FROM: LOGIC 3 ● £15
We've had all sorts of third-party shatpads round here. Some have leaked oil. Some have smelled like cyanide. Others have not actually worked at all. This is definitely the best of the lot.



POWER LINK

DATEL ● £10 ● WWW.CODEJUNKIES.COM

Linking your Game Boy Advance to your Gamecube is definitely the Way Forward (© Nintendo 2003), but have you tried getting your hands on one of the official link cables lately? They're rarer than Iraqi weapons of mass destruction these days, with many shops having cleared out their stocks months ago. We've had problems with a handful of third-party ones in the past, including a model that cut the power to the Gamecube as soon as it was plugged in, but this one seems to work as well as anything else. What it lacks is the plastic clippy bit that locks onto the top of the GBA, but as long as you don't wrench the machine around while playing you'll be as safe as you are when using a normal GBA-to-GBA link cable. It even comes with a disc of evil cheats for six link-compatible games.

MUCH THE SAME AS...



OFFICIAL LINK CABLE
FROM: NINTENDO ● £10
Given the choice, everyone in the office would go for the official option, simply because it has a Nintendo logo on it. Now how shallow is that?

NGC BEST BUY

TRAVEL PAK

FROM JOYTECH ● £15 ● WWW.JOYTECH.CO.UK

The ultimate travel accessory would have to be a clip to attach a GBA to your car dashboard, allowing you to play *Mario Kart* during long stretches of tedious motorway while steering with your knees. But until somebody decides to produce one, you'll have to make do with simple power adaptors and headphone sockets. This selection is probably the best of its type we've seen so far, with an impressively curly power cable for attaching to a lighter socket. There's a sturdily constructed link cable that's suspiciously identical to the official version, and a headphone adaptor that does the job just fine. The best part has to be the GBA SP case, which is simple and functional. The headphones are tacky, but in all it's a good buy.

BETTER THAN...

MACRO KIT FOR GBA SP
FROM: MAD CATZ ● £20
Much the same sort of thing, but the shiny metallic case isn't as practical for carrying around as the much smaller one you get with the Joytech effort.

USB GBA SP LEAD

FROM JOYTECH ● £5 ● WWW.JOYTECH.CO.UK

If you have the kind of job where you can get away with playing on your GBA SP at work (maybe your boss thinks it's some kind of flashy PDA thing) then congratulations to you. But if you forget to take your power supply or recharge the night before, then you could run out of juice in the middle of an *Advance Wars* campaign. Nightmare! This lead plugs into your computer and keeps the GBA powered up, thus avoiding undue stress in the workplace.

BETTER THAN...

FLAT BATTERY
IN YOUR OFFICE ● TOTALLY MISERABLE
Is there anything worse than being fired for playing games all day? Yes. Getting a flat battery on your SP.

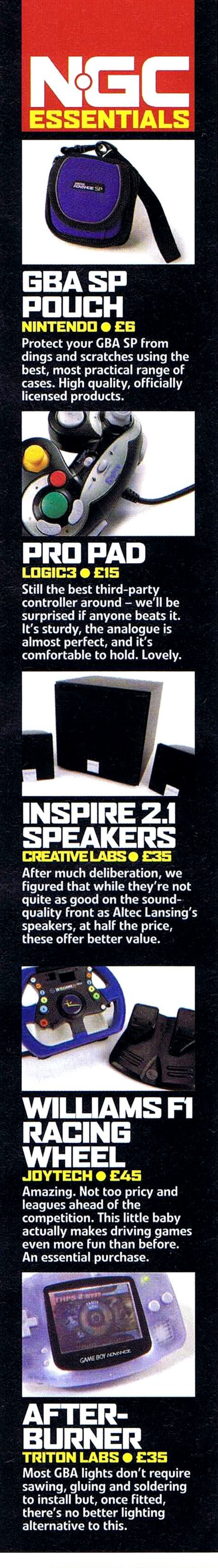
ADVANCED MUSIC PLAYER

FROM DATEL ● £30 ● WWW.CODEJUNKIES.COM

MP3s, eh? All the music you ever wanted – for free! No need to buy an entire album when you only want one or two tracks. Just fire up your PC and cut out those money-grabbing 'artistes' by downloading their stuff from the Interweb. This MP3 player for GBA is clever in that you can add 'skins' to make the on-screen display look exactly the way you like, and copy music from your own CDs. It doesn't have a great deal of memory – about enough for one album – but on the plus side, it's about a tenth of the price of the ubiquitous iPod.

BETTER THAN...

GBA SP FM RADIO
FROM INTEC ● £8
Listen to the radio while you play games. Revolutionary! Of course, by 'revolutionary' we mean 'a complete waste of money'.



NGC ESSENTIALS

GBA SP POUCH
NINTENDO ● £6
Protect your GBA SP from dings and scratches using the best, most practical range of cases. High quality, officially licensed products.

PRO PAD
LOGIC3 ● £15
Still the best third-party controller around – we'll be surprised if anyone beats it. It's sturdy, the analogue is almost perfect, and it's comfortable to hold. Lovely.

INSPIRE 2.1 SPEAKERS
CREATIVE LABS ● £35
After much deliberation, we figured that while they're not quite as good on the sound-quality front as Altec Lansing's speakers, at half the price, these offer better value.

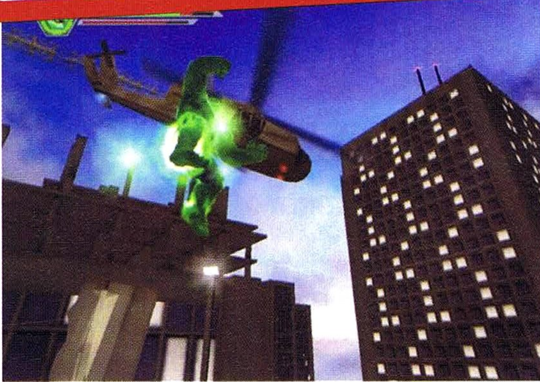
WILLIAMS F1 RACING WHEEL
JOYTECH ● £45
Amazing. Not too pricy and leagues ahead of the competition. This little baby actually makes driving games even more fun than before. An essential purchase.

AFTER-BURNER
TRITON LABS ● £35
Most GBA lights don't require sawing, gluing and soldering to install but, once fitted, there's no better lighting alternative to this.

EXPERT TIPS, TOUGH CHALLENGES, TRIVIA AND MORE

NGC EXTENDED PLAY









New cheat codes for Hulk – invincibility, full rage, smaaaAAAASH! Er… P102

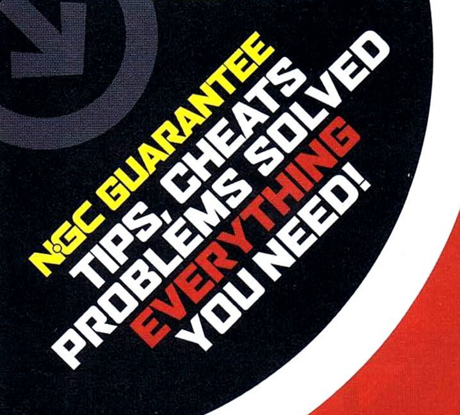
CONTENTS

A concise guide to the informative guts within…

△ PHANTASY FORUM: Does the whole *Phantasy Star Online* 'thing' confuse you? We won't let it…



△ GAME ON: The place where diehards set challenges for their fellow NGC readers. Care to meet them?



THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



P.N.03

UNLOCK BLACKBIRD SUIT
Finish the game to unlock the Blackbird Suit. After loading the 'Clear Game' data, start a new game and the sleek 'n' saucy suit will be there for you to change into. The suit comes fully equipped.

UNLOCK THE PAPILLON SUIT
Complete the game (on any difficulty) twice using the same game file and Vanessa can get kitted out with this beauty.

UNLOCK HARD MODE
Complete the game on normal and then load the 'Clear Game' data. You'll now be able to select the harder difficulty setting when you start a new game.

BURNOUT2

UNLOCK INVULNERABILITY
Not that tricky to find, this. Simply finish the Grand Prix Championships to access Invulnerability.

UNLOCK EVERYTHING
Unlock Free mode in the first *Burnout* and save onto a memory card. Now access the save game data from within *Burnout 2* and everything in the game will be yours for the taking. Muahaha.

UNLOCK FREE RUN
Finish all the stages – yup, all of 'em – in the Custom Series Championship. Now you can ride around with no traffic.

UNLOCK FACE OFF
Unlock and finish all three Face Offs in the Championship mode.

UNLOCK RUNAWAY
Finish all Crash mode levels earning a gold on each. Runaway mode does not allow you to use the breaks.

UNLOCK PURSUIT
Unlock and finish all three Pursuit stages in the Championship mode.

BLACK AND BRUISED

All codes must be input in the game's Cheats Menu. *Or nothing will happen…*

INTERCONTINENTAL MODE
START, A, A, A, Y, Y, Y, X, X, X, START

TURBO MODE
START, Z, Z, Z, Z, Z, Z, Z, Z, Z, Z, START

UNLOCK ALL BOXERS
START, A, Y, X, X, Z, Z, X, Y, A, START

UNLOCK ALL 2ND SKINS
START, A, Z, Y, X, START

INVULNERABILITY
START, A, A, Y, Y, Z, Z, X, X, START

UNLOCK DUMP
START, Y, Z, Y, Z, A, A, START

UNLOCK ALL CHAPTERS
START, A, X, Y, Z, A, X, Y, Z, START

CONVERSATION MODE
START, Z, A, Y, X, Z, Z, Z, START

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

In Phantasy Star Online you can help new characters level up much quicker by transferring any old Mags and Weapons from older characters through the multiplayer option.

James Leach, via email

HITMAN 2

UNLOCK SAWN-OFF SHOTGUN
Complete any two missions with a Silent Assassin rating and the gun will appear in your shed.

UNLOCK M4
To get this baby, achieve a Silent Assassin rating on the St Petersburg missions and then go on to complete the 'Invitation to a Party' mission.

UNLOCK SILENCED BALLERS
Simply achieve a Silent Assassin rating on any mission for this.

HULK

Go to the Options menu and select the Code Input option. Enter all codes here.

DOUBLE HULK'S HP
H, L, T, H, D, S, E

LEVEL SELECT
T, R, U, B, L, V, R

DOUBLE ENEMIES' HP
B, R, N, G, I, T, N

UNLIMITED CONTINUES
G, R, N, C, H, T, R

REGENERATOR
F, L, S, H, W, N, D

HALVE ENEMIES' HP
M, M, M, Y, H, L, P

RESET HIGH SCORE
N, M, B, T, H, I, H

INVINCIBILITY
G, M, M, S, K, I, N

WICKED PUNCH
F, S, T, O, F, R, Y

FULL RAGE
A, N, G, M, N, G, T

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

Enter either (or, indeed, both) of these codes at the Code Entry menu.

ALL COURSES
1, 4, C, O, U, R, S, E, S

ALL GOLFERS
A, L, L, T, W, 3

EXTRA MONEY
If you use a memory card that already contains a save game from an EA Sports game (like *FIFA 2003*) then you'll automatically be given extra cash. That's favouritism, that is…

DAKAR 2

Not exactly the most popular racer this, but it's actually quite good. Enter the following codes on the code input screen.

UNLOCK ALL CARS
S, W, E, E, T, A, S

UNLOCK ALL TRACKS
B, O, N, Z, E, R

RESIDENT EVIL2

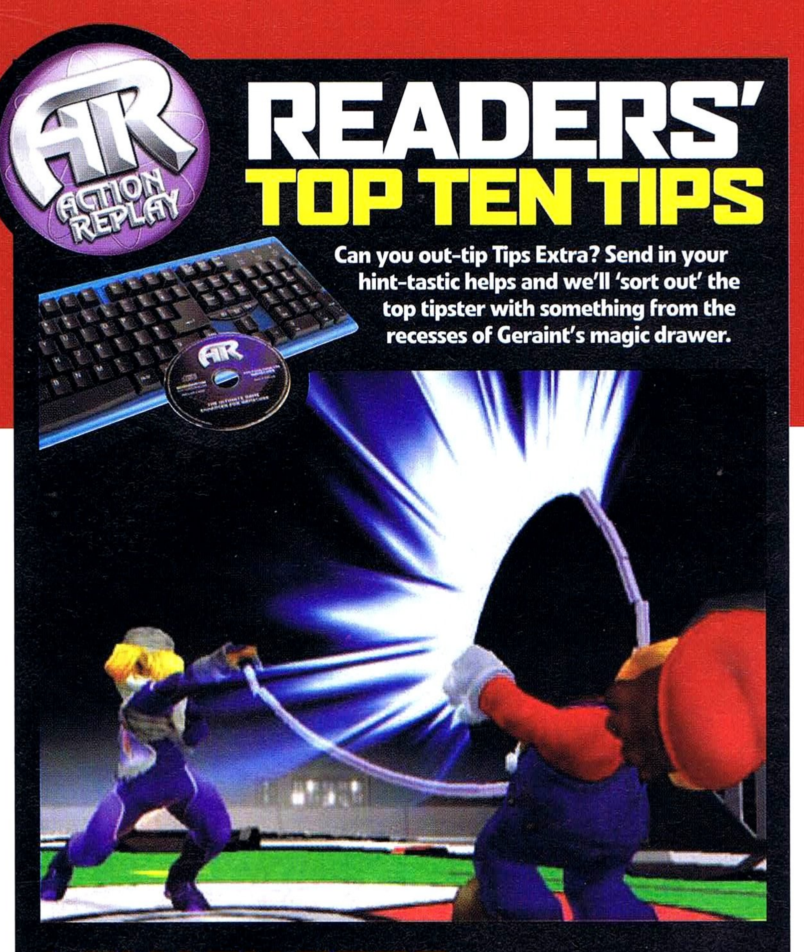
UNLIMITED AMMO
Start the game and press Start to show the Options screen. Select the Button Config option, highlight Aim and then hold down R and press Z ten times.The white box around Aim will turn red if you've done it all correctly, and now you can blast away to your heart's content.

SECRET FILM
Go to the S.T.A.R.S office. Look for the desk that says 'it's trashed' when you search it. To find the secret film you need to search it 50 times in a row. And the desk will still be trashed at the end of it.

ROCKET LAUNCHER
Fancy mashing some zombies with style? Beat the game on Hard Mode and achieve no less than a B rank. When you start the game again the rocket launcher will be in your chest.

NEW COSTUMES
Start a new game on normal difficulty with any character you like and don't pick up *anything* at all. Nothing. Nada. Now head for the police station and you'll see someone on the stairs outside. Go down the stairs and you'll see the zombiefied Brad Vickers. Kill him and he'll drop a special key. Now, when you get to the dark room, use the key in the lockers you find there. A screen will pop up asking you if you want the new costumes. Say 'Yes', and the whole lot will be available to you. Wick!

Lashings of searing pain from the leathery tips whip……



READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with something from the recesses of Geraint's magic drawer.

1. SMASH BROS

Electric shock threatment

When an Electrode turns black and is about to explode, move into the centre of it and press A to make your character pick it up. Press A again to throw it. It might be a good idea to throw it quickly, though – when they self-destruct, they hurt…
Danny Drew, Paignton

2. HULK

Smashy smashy
To defeat Madman easily, grab him and then do the move where Hulk snaps his enemy on his shoulders twice then drops him onto his knee. This should give you enough time to do some serious damage to the nearest generator before he gets up. When the generators are destroyed, chuck him into the electrical field.
Chris Allies, Hayes

3. HITMAN 2

Tradesman's entrance
On the Death of Hannelore level there is an easy entry point to the building. Search the hole things near the ladder. One houses a secret passage to a ladder which comes up in the corner of the courtyard and is far less obvious than the pond entry.
Ewan Wilkie, via email

4. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

Zelda's freebie
When fighting the final boss, use the grappling hook on Zelda to replenish a bit of health.
Thomas Lee, Ashton-Under-Lyne

5. SMASH BROS

Sticky puff
Did you know that if Jigglypuff breaks its shield, it flies out of the top of the screen? Get Jigglypuff to stand under a roof which you can't jump through and then break your shield. Jigglypuff should temporarily stick to the roof.
Matt Coxhill, Buckingham

6. SPLINTER CELL

Cameraman
If you're low on ammo, it's possible to shoot a sticky camera at a guard's head, knocking him clean out. To make things even better you can go over and pick it back up. Unlimited ammo.
Dean Hailstone, Jarrow

7. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

Hat's enough
Use the Deku Leaf to blow the hat off one of the large yellow traders. *Ocarina of Time* veterans will be surprised to see who it is.
Timothy Doyle, Ireland

8. ENVELOPES

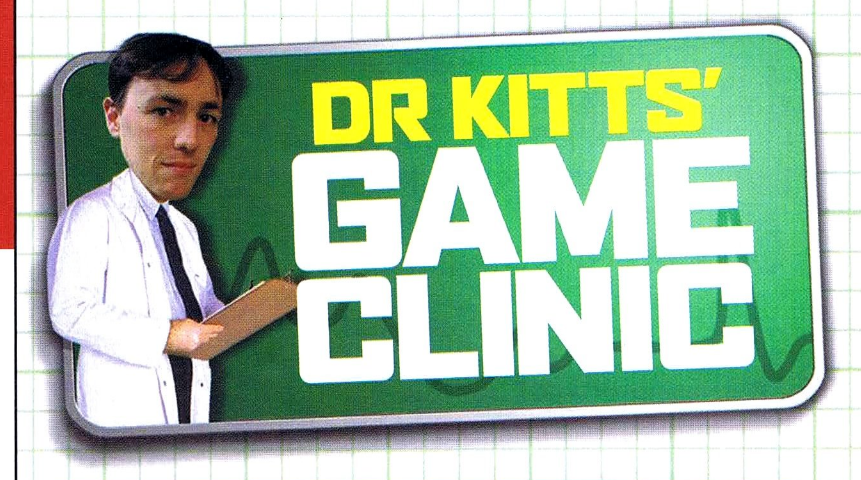
Recycling
Put a blank sticker over old addresses on envelopes to use them again.
Mystery letter person

9. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

Steeplejack
Go to Windfall's ferris wheel and jump onto the stair rail by the man in orange. Jump onto the tree, then onto the upper walkway. Turn right and walk up to the spire. If you stand by the hole, you can backflip higher up the spire.
David MacDonald, Roslin

10. GAMECUBE

Duh!
To have your own music on a GC game, remove the white composite lead from the TV and replace it with the same colour lead from your stereo.
Michael Rothwell, Wirral





The doctor's been sharpening his instruments. Even the thermometer.

Dr Kitts,
I'm replaying *Metroid Prime* on hard and I've got to Meta Ridley but I just can't beat him. Any strategies?
Morgan Perret, Devises

Dr Kitts locks the door and throws away the key…
This is pretty easy as long as you've collected ALL the missile upgrades – so do that before attempting to kill him. Once you've got everything, don't waste any missiles on Ridley when he's flying around. Instead, stay close to the edge of the area and use charged Plasma Beam blasts to get him onto his grounded phase. Now, with all your missiles stocked up, wait for him to scream and unleash your Wave Buster at him. Don't stop using it, even if it's not doing damage, as it will track back and forth from his mouth to his chest. Keep this up and he'll be unable to use his different attacks – making your life a whole lot easier, and his lifespan much much shorter.

Dr Kitts,
I have been playing *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* ever since its release but I've been stusk on the same bit for weeks and weeks. Where in the freakin' hell do you learn the BALLAD OF GALES?! I have looked all over the place for it and just can't find it! Please help me! I beg of you! PLEASE!
Mathew Rudman, email

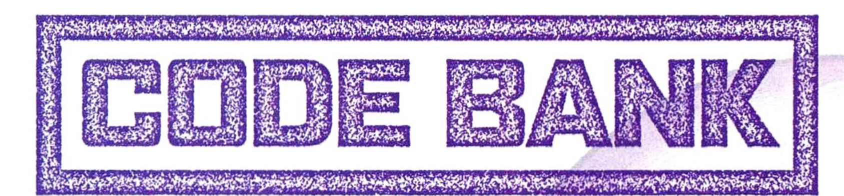
Dr Kitts wants his picture removed from the magazine.
'Stusk'?!? You might want to run that through your spell checker. Just to be sure, eh? Anyway, the Ballad of the Gales can only be earned if you've got yourself the Bow and Arrow. Sail the seas and look for the big whirlwind (you know, the one that warps you to a random spot on the map). When it's sucking you in, take out your bow and shoot the cloud-surfing frog in its centre. Hit him enough times and he'll stop sucking your ship in and award you with the ballad. Easy.

Dr Kitts,
I imported *F-Zero* for use with my Freeloader, but it doesn't work, so what can I do?
So, so many people, Everywhere

Dr Kitts raises his middle finger.
It won't work with a Freeloader, but if you enter these codes into an Action Replay…
1 GE0E-N57N-NG1QW
2 XWUF-2990-RMYFT
3 ETRW-XUTM-4KQ98
4 BU1R-MZAZ-Y68RA
… you'll be just fine.



in association with 



Official Action Replay codes from Datel. Look – new *Ikaruga* cheats!

NBA STREET VOL 2

Master code
1 KP1F-XZQQ-AJFWB
2 KUUP-9UK5-0WJGA

Infinite Creation points
1 68BB-85PJ-9H893
2 YKYW-GE04-KMNVG

No clock violations
1 YR4Q-Z28X-D2XCF
2 YEBQ-F2WE-YKTZM

Create massive players
1 FT9R-AQ8D-N6D4Q
2 TWAA-FKWT-RDGTX

Create tiny players
1 0XKW-W2GV-DN51R
2 60ZX-VX16-53AA5

IKARUGA

Master code
1 NV61-1BDU-PG3ND
2 7318-9R3H-R6G5F

Player 1 infinite lives
1 QZTG-5XFA-PHWMP
2 G2GV-1JRV-AZ4RQ

Player 2 infinite lives
1 PKEH-D0F6-5P3HU
2 9WC6-U135-YJYFT

Player 1 max power up
1 XRVM-AFBN-CHTCD
2 76JC-QTWD-U2JC5

Player 2 max power up
1 KH43-W61D-1VYAQ
2 GUU7-F4M0-GKWZ7

Player 1 max combo chain
1 0T7T-0DF9-DQ5NA
2 HAPZ-G6F1-5R4P9

Player 2 max combo chain
1 BDBM-NR91-TFXNE
2 1QQ1-EZPB-J5R81

Infinite continues
1 3RBW-4DBF-9AK66
2 X4EZ-6606-8ZYT5

RED FACTION 2

Master code
1 TWF2-16FY-0KZZ4
2 PAHN-83TP-F8PR2

All inbuilt cheats open
1 QMAP-B8Z9-WGJ48
2 1ACA-5H3Z-7MAB0
3 R9YZ-QG08-TNZ90
4 D5HB-4R4W-F9RMN

Super health
1 QJ88-DBRH-Y5J1U
2 9P71-FMZC-Q0G73

Infinite ammo
1 XE89-CPKX-MHBYP
2 076C-74Z0-UY3AP

Infinite grenades
1 MH25-QV9C-NDKDW
2 5ZQF-4H89-PT549

Wacky deaths
1 1MM5-YYNH-3X770
2 8JXH-NKP7-RWAFM

Director's cut
1 4ACM-5X0G-KQ442
2 VPH3-QE60-EV5M1

Walking dead
1 6QA2-43MU-RJECJ
2 3K4P-4F9H-VWKAA

Rapid rails
1 Z7B2-P7R3-RRRFF
2 CJ9K-2V5Z-471WU

Rain of fire
1 Q7KN-FZ35-P2T4X
2 PKBA-TQ9Z-WME2Q

Gibby ammo
1 9V8F-N5PZ-6QKQ2
2 18G3-VW1V-PR8H8

Gibby explosions
1 KFYE-K7EK-4KAQ6
2 N7TR-MBV4-A4AN8

Explosive personality
1 0K1P-0E37-2726X
2 8CF4-3U53-6BW07

SONIC ADVENTURE DX

Master code
1 7VD8-KFP5-2MXCQ
2 AZUA-T8YF-Q81PW

999 rings
1 88PG-DMHT-HZMYT
2 RHVZ-GJMU-U7CBF

Freeze timer
1 4U3E-8E2K-F506W
2 FYPX-825H-0H6ZR
3 Z58V-E7Q8-9WNDH

All characters
1 VEPP-7GYR-BWP4U
2 DDK8-7YG2-592WG
3 45A5-Y26E-XJ7MV

HITMAN 2

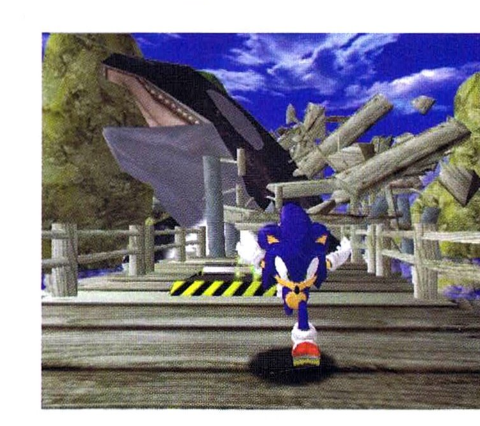
Master code
1 P703-663F-5CN8H
2 CHGV-WEG5-6FC6X

Infinite health
1 MAKE-V4D4-MBZ3E
2 JXYG-VUY7-RJ81Z

Infinite ammo/no reload
1 1DP3-KAHV-CBP9H
2 T5VU-3WKV-D2VPP
3 KY2G-CB61-K786Q

Infinite saves
1 CP4W-MNGN-JHFTD
2 HVJ3-NDW5-NNDRM

L + D-pad left for all items/weapons
1 Z11R-G6J0-T7366
2 E3GE-750M-8UJ5Y
3 3K89-YZ4Q-11EHK
4 K1VW-F3XM-MQ4UK



NGC YOUR TOP TIPS

YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE…

HERE'S MY TOP TIP…

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a luvverly prize. Good, huh? But don't send us cheat codes from the net. Quirky!



Name ....

Address ....

..........Postcode

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi, to help focus your mind.



AND NOW… WITNESS THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THESE ARMED AND FULLY OPERATIONAL GAMING LEAGUES!

I'M THE BEST

WIN!

Heaving! No, not Enjiki's prodigious frontage, nor the entire team at the thought of one of bald boy Bickham's spicy prawn baguettes *still* being locked in his drawer, but the postbag of excellent I'm The Best entries. Everyone who entered, even if they didn't get onto the scoreboard, deserves a brief session of feeling smug and superior. (Well, except for the anonymous fool who sent us an entry for Spot The Ball with no name or address. We're not psychic, y'know. We need a name.)

WIN STUFF!

So, how can you be the best? You could try the patented Kitts route of killing all other entrants, but that's just not cricket. (It's actually free-for-all homicide, sports fans.) Nope, you send us your entries (see the red box below for details) and earn points for each challenge you beat – and you only get the points for each challenge once, so don't think you can get away with entering the same one a bazillion times. When you've accumulated enough, you'll make it onto the leaderboard. We keep track of every single entrant's score, so all your entries count. Be one of the five GameCube Gods at the top of the table at the end of the year and you'll win something impressive, as befits your deity-like ability. You won't win anything for coming top in an individual challenge, but hey, you'll be the *best*. Got your scores? Get 'em in!

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!

Largely because our poor, throbbing heads could no longer brook the biting, handbag fights and bitter complaints it engendered, and also because it was rubbish, we've replaced the tired and ailing Star Performance with Mission Impossible. Your mission? To follow our instructions to the letter, however whimsical they may be. And it could be anything. The first person who completes the task in the allotted time wins. Simple as that…

THIS MONTH…

ENTER THE MATRIX AGENT UNDER FLIER

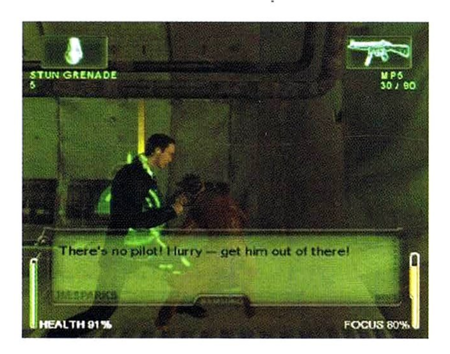
That Agent on the plane, he's not too tough. Well, not as tough as the sea of black-suited circuit-generated nasties you have to evade later on. We'll give you 15 points for every minute over two minutes that you and he duke it out in the back of the plane before you throw him out to his virtual doom. If he beats you, you don't get the points – which means you'll have to time his one-man budget flight just right.

THE LAW

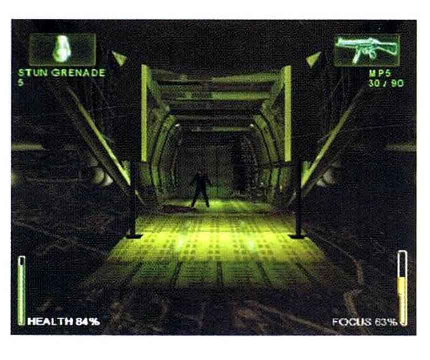
❑ You've got to be Niobe fighting the Agent on board the plane. Fighting an Agent at any other point as Ghost or Niobe won't count.

❑ The fight has to end with you booting him out the back of the plane. If he pushes you out, you don't get any points. Nil. Nada. Zilch. Zip. Nothing. Nowt. Not a sausage. Got that?

❑ We'll need video evidence of your whole fight. You *could* send us a tape with the recording starting partway through, but we'd only time the bits we could see, and you'd lose valuable seconds. And NO CHEATS allowed.

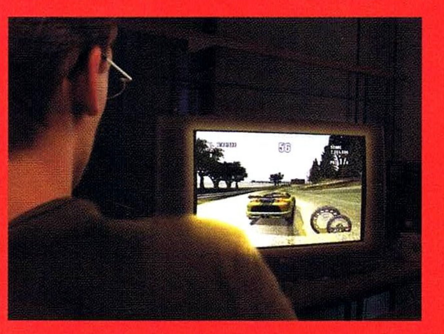




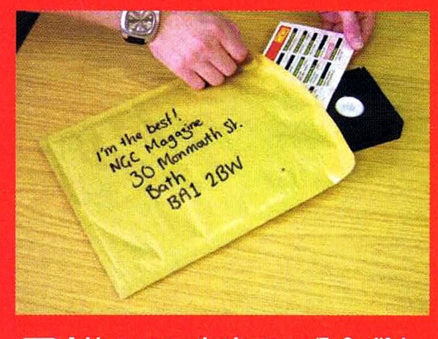


BEAT THE BEST!

Want to see your name up in lights? Sorry, not possible. But we can put it up in ink – just prove you're worthy of the honour.



1 **First, play, play, play! Abandon friends and fripperies like bathing and going to the lav. The path to gaming godhood is solitary…**



2 **Achieve a score that beats our 'To Qualify' minimum. Gather the appropriate evidence (video/photo) and send us this and your form…**



3 **Wait an issue or two and see where your score gets you. The more challenges you nail, the higher you climb in the table…**

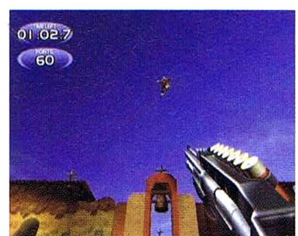
NEW!

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better...

TIMESPLITTERS 2





CUT 'EM OUT!

WE WANT Your highest score in the Take 'Em Down challenge.
THE LAW You have to complete the level, buster!
TO QUALIFY 500 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the final screen showing your score and the fact that you've finished.
POINTS 20

1	4275	Michael Rothwell, Wallasey
2	4275	Mr S, Aberdare
3	4250	Rex McGee, Trowbridge
4	4175	David McDonald, Warwick
5	4150	Jason Leverett, Great Yarmouth

MONKEY MARKSMAN

WE WANT Your highest score in the Simian Shoot-Out challenge.
THE LAW None, as such. Just kill as many monkeys as you can. With extreme prejudice.
TO QUALIFY 200 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the final results screen.
POINTS 25

1	4080	Rex McGee, Trowbridge
2	3800	Bryan Docherty, Govrock
3	2555	Harold Rooney-Nugent, London
4	2385	Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, Milton Keynes
5	2285	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port

BURNOUT 2





CHAIN DRIVER

WE WANT Your highest chain, as the name would suggest.
THE LAW You can do this on any track you like.
TO QUALIFY You have to have racked up at least 9 chains.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results screen will do for this one.
POINTS 20

1	31	Ewan McKenzie, Dumfries
2	29	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port
3	20	Grant David Taylor, Edinburgh
4	17	Bruce Livings, Watford
5	11	Mr S, Aberdare

DOLLAR KILLS

WE WANT The highest amount of damage, in dollars, on the Out Of Control Tower Crash Scenario.
THE LAW You can use any car you like.
TO QUALIFY $50,000,000
EVIDENCE A pic of the final results screen
POINT 20

1	$128,990,568	Thomas Cox, Birchington
2	$89,254,272	Harjeet Bains, Birmingham
3	$85,150,056	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port
4	$79,172,264	Paul Edwards, NGC
5	$58,506,128	Bruce Livings, Watford

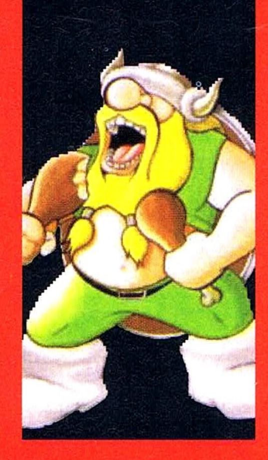
To spice things up a bit, you'll notice that we've also included extraneous Random Challenges – which can be related to games, or be completely whimsical. Again, fulfil our wishes to the letter and points will be yours. Simple. There's even a Spot the Ball competition (it's basketball this month, but it can be anything ball related. Or not). Keray-zee...

VIRTUAL REALITY YOU!

Where acute embarrassment becomes financial gain...

THIS MONTH THE PILLAGE PEOPLE

This month, we want a picture of you **dressed up as one of the Lost Vikings, asking someone for directions**. You can be asking for help at a tourist information office, talking to a bus driver, questioning a guide at a tourist attraction or whatever. However, what we do want is a picture of you **wearing a horny helmet and full beard – real or false – alongside someone associated with travel or tourism**. The one thing we wouldn't recommend is bothering policemen as they might mistake you for a stray member of a stag party. Entries we receive by 29th September win 70 points.



PIKMIN



GREEN FINGERS #1

WE WANT The highest score in Distant Spring.
THE LAW In Challenge mode, grow as many Pikmin as you can.
TO QUALIFY 300 Pikmin.
EVIDENCE Pic of the results table.
POINTS 20

1	338	Andrew McGrae, Southport
2	327	Bruce Livings, Watford
3	316	Dermot Ryan, Mullingar
4	300	Steve Brooks, Broughton Astley
5	70	Pigman, Pigman, Pigman, Pigman

GREEN FINGERS #2

WE WANT The highest score in Forest of Hope.
THE LAW In Challenge mode, grow as many Pikmin as you can.
TO QUALIFY 300 Pikmin.
EVIDENCE Pic of the results table.
POINTS 20

1	467	Andrew McGrae, Southport
2	344	Dermot Ryan, Mullingar
3	314	Bruce Livings, Watford
4	312	Steve Brooks, Broughton Astley
5	305	Simon Mason, West Parley; Michael Rothwell, Wallasey



NBA STREET SPOT THE BALL

X MARKS THE SPOT

Yep, it's more basketball fun this month – although if the weather stays as hot as it is as we go to press, next month we may well switch to beach volleyball. You haven't lived until you've seen Paul in a bikini, long golden locks flowing in the wind. Ahem. Anyhow, just cut out the form, draw an x where you think the ball is and send your entry to us.

❑ The entry we receive marking the spot closest to the centre of the ball by Monday 29th September wins **40 points**.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO... I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

NEW!

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

METROID PRIME





THE FULL METROID

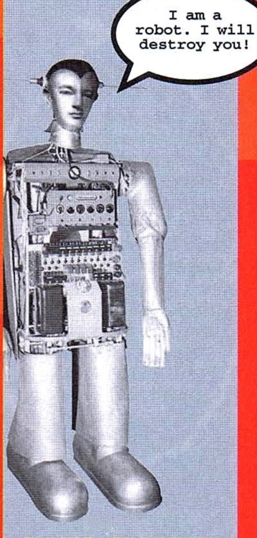
WE WANT Your fastest time completing the entire game.
THE LAW Collect at least 50% of all items.
TO QUALIFY 9 hours.
EVIDENCE A photo of the results screen.
POINTS 60

1	4:10h	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port
2	5:01h	Dermot Ryan, Mullingar
3	5:25h	David McDonald, Warwick
4	5:35h	Harold Rooney-Nugent, London
5	6:23h	Bruce Livings, Watford

STATION ESCAPE

SOOO… How quickly can you escape from the space station as it goes into meltdown?
THE LAW No cheats!
TO QUALIFY At least 3:16 remaining.
EVIDENCE Video
POINTS 15

1	4:04m	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port
2	3:49m	Harold Rooney-Nugent, London
3	3:44m	Barry Lewis, Dairsie
4	3:41m	David McDonald, Warwick
5	3:39m	Jason Leverett, Great Yarmouth



DAVID GOSEN'S INHUMAN GAMING EFFICIENCY DIRECTIVE

1011101010100101 10110… Your muscles and fragile bones are no match for modern technology, and your emotions prevent you from achieving your full potential. To promote focussed thinking, I shall award 101.01 of those 'points' you crave to whoever can provide evidence of:

Completing Pikmin in an organised and ruthless 12 days or fewer.

Pictorial evidence will suffice. Correct entries we open before 29th September will also be given the chance to apply to trade in their fleshy bodies for a metallic casing.

Congratulations to Steve Brooks, Dean Hailstone, Dave Every and Bruce Livings for rising above their human limitations and beating my challenge in issue 83.

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE



WARPED FACTOR FUN

WE WANT Your fastest time on the Hillside Cave Secret.
THE LAW This is the 'secret Shine', where you have to collect the Red coins within a time limit.
TO QUALIFY At least eight seconds remaining.
EVIDENCE A picture of the screen once you've collected the coins, clearly showing your time.
POINTS 15

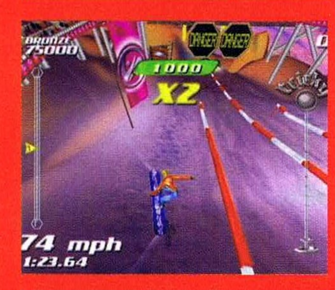
1	25:31s	Dean Hailstone, Jarrow
2	24:23s	Harold Rooney-Nugent, London
3	24:28s	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port
4	22:44s	Rob Jones, Poole
5	18:80s	Lee Graham, Bristol

COINING IT IN

WE WANT Your highest tally of coins on the Bianco Hills level.
THE LAW Choose any Story.
TO QUALIFY Get AT LEAST 110 coins (as netting 100 coins bags you a Shine).
EVIDENCE A picture of the totals screen (press Z to get it) clearly showing your total coin tally for Bianco Hills.
POINTS 20

1	189	Rob Jones, Poole
2	186	Andrew McGrae, Southport
3	184	Michael Seaward, Stanley
4	175	Thomas Cox, Birchington
5	173	Lee Graham, Bristol

SSX TRICKY



SNOWOFF

WE WANT Your highest score in the Showoff event.
THE LAW You have to use the Elysium Alps course. You can use any boarder, but only with the default board.
TO QUALIFY 75,000 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results.
POINTS 15

1	810,140	Andrew McGrae, Southport
2	805,425	Rex McGee, Trowbridge
3	638,020	Bruce Livings, Watford
4	401,878	Steve Brooks, Broughton Astley
5	354,480	Matt Dyson, Southampton

FIFA 2003



MADRID MASTER

CAN YOU Thump Real Madrid?
THE LAW No memory cards; default settings; World Class difficulty; play a friendly as Ajax.
TO QUALIFY Win by three goals.
EVIDENCE Taped from the 'no memory card present' screen to the end of the match.
POINTS 15

1	5-2	Michael Seaward, Stanley
2	5-2m	Matt Dyson, Southampton
3	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month
4	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month
5	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month

WIN!

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

KITTSY'S KARNIVAL OF KILLING!

ZOMBIE STOMP

Ah, zombies. The problem with killing things is that, once they're dead, all the fun goes out of them. Unless you're short of a date on Saturday night, that is. But zombies get up and just keep coming, even the bits that drop off and get kicked under the sofa, so you can carry on shooting and burning and hacking away at them when most creatures would have long since given up twitching and moaning… Ah, happy thoughts. Indulge me.

Playing *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* as usual, see if you can kill **over 30 zombies** in **one real-time minute**. You can choose your location and weapon, because I'm nice like that.

Send in videotaped evidence of your evil deeds before 29th September to win **20 points**.



SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE





FUNGI TO BE WITH

WE WANT Your quickest time of the Mushroom Kingdom stage of Adventure mode (the first bit).
THE LAW Use any character.
TO QUALIFY There must be at least 36500 time remaining (the better the performance, the more time remains).
EVIDENCE A pic of the Stage Clear screen, which shows your time remaining.
POINTS 10

1	38700	David Cathrine, Edinburgh
2	38600	Dean Hailstone, Jarrow
3	38600	Harold Rooney-Nugent, London
4	38400	Rob Jones, Poole
5	38200	Thomas Cox, Birchington; Lee Graham, Bristol

HERE COMES TROUBLE

WE WANT Your quickest time defeating Bowser on the Trouble King event.
THE LAW None!
TO QUALIFY Beat Bowser in less than 25 seconds.
EVIDENCE A clear picture of your time on the Event Match menu.
POINTS 10

1	10:78s	Tim Osborne, Newcastle
2	10:99s	Rex McGee, Trowbridge
3	11:40s	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port
4	12:50s	Bryan Docherty, Govrock
5	12:73s	Harold Rooney-Nugent, London

IKARUGA





ROBOT CHALLENGE #1

WE WANT Your highest chain on the first level.
THE LAW The three laws of robotics. Possibly.
TO QUALIFY A chain of 80.
EVIDENCE A picture of the final results screen with you score displayed.
POINTS 35

1	115	Steve Brooks, Broughton Astley
2	89	Rob Jones, Poole
3	86	Janne Kaitila, Finland
4	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month
5	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month

ROBOT CHALLENGE #2

WE WANT Your fastest time defeating the boss on Level 2 (your time remaining).
THE LAW Moore's law.
TO QUALIFY 70 seconds remaining on the clock.
EVIDENCE Pic of the explosion at the end with the time displayed.
POINTS 30

1	76s	Rob Jones, Poole
2	75s	Steve Brooks, Broughton Astley
3	72s	Janne Kaitila, Finland
4	71s	Andrew McGrae, Southport
5	71s	Bruce Livings, Watford

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2





GIBBON GLIDER

WE WANT Your highest score on Monkey Target.
THE LAW Over six rounds, with items turned OFF.
TO QUALIFY 2,500 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results screen will do.
POINTS 20

1	4690	Mr S, Aberdare
2	3911	Adam Toulson, Crowborough
3	3670	Jason Leverett, Great Yarmouth
4	3670	Rex McGee, Trowbridge
5	3480	Simon Mason, West Parley

SUB MISSION

WE WANT Your fastest time on Monkey Race Time Trial.
THE LAW Any monkey on the Submarine Street track.
TO QUALIFY Within 1:00:00.
EVIDENCE Pic of the final results screen.
POINTS 50 (More than before!)

1	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month
2	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month
3	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month
4	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month
5	0:00m	Your name here?, Next month



SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

NEW!

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better...

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION



GREEN HILL SKILLZ

WE WANT Your fastest time in driving a blue rodent in a left-to-right fashion on the Green Hill zone, Act 1.
THE LAW You must finish with at least 150 rings.
TO QUALIFY Within 4 minutes!
EVIDENCE Pic of the status screen.
POINTS 15

1	0:43m	**Lee Graham** Bristol
2	0:48m	**Lewis Voigtländer-Ford** Milton Keynes
3	0:50m	**Jason Leverett** Great Yarmouth
4	0:57m	**David Cathrine** Edinburgh
5	1:10m	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

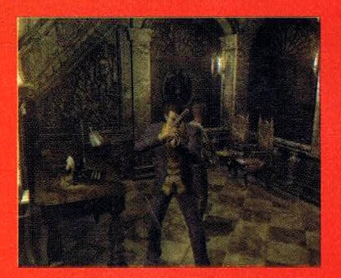


FREE FLIGHT

WE WANT The longest flight in the Birdman contest.
THE LAW Go to the platform east of Dragon Roost Island, and fly. Like a bird.
TO QUALIFY Fly at least 250m.
EVIDENCE Take a picture when the Rito mentions your score.
POINTS 20

1	411yds	**Larry Furness/Iain Madder** Cyberspace
2	306yds	**Adam Weston** Ballycranbeg
3	268yds	**Dean Hailstone** Jarrow
4	266yds	**Mr S** Aberdare
5	265yds	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

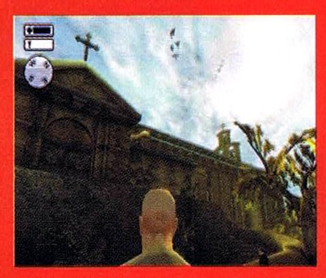


SON OF A LEECH

WE WANT You to collect as many leeches as you can in Leech Hunter.
THE LAW Complete the main game!
TO QUALIFY Collect at least 25 leeches of both colours.
EVIDENCE Photo of the stat screen showing your leech total.
POINTS 35

1	50/50	**Rob Jones** Poole
2	49/48	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
3	29/28	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley
4	26/30	**Michael Rothwell** Wallasey
5	25/26	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding

HITMAN 2



SPEED KILLER

WE WANT Your fastest time eliminating the target on the Anathema mission.
THE LAW You must achieve a Silent Assassin rating!
TO QUALIFY 15 minutes.
EVIDENCE Pic of the status screen.
POINTS 40

1	4:33m	**Barry Lewis** Dairsie
2	4:57m	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
3	4:59m	**Lee Graham** Bristol
4	5:06m	**Simon Mason** West Parley
5	5:36m	**Michael Seaward** Stanley

JAMES DEAN'S DRIVING TEST

If it's *Burnout* you want, the Deanster knows all about it.

Forget rubbish like steering and braking, when you get behind the wheel of a car you want it to go fast. And that's what this challenge is all about. See, **get into Time Attack mode** and see how well you do driving **the Custom Sports Car** around the **Sunrise Valley Downtown course**. But, man, anyone can do one good lap, so you have to drive **all four with no cheats or reversals**, and **NGC** are going to award **50 points** to the reader who completes all four laps in the fastest time by **29th September**. **Video evidence from the power-on screen** is needed. And you too could be like me one day.

NEW! SOUL CALIBUR II



SOUL SURVIVOR

WE WANT You to survive as long as you can.
THE LAW Use any character in Basic Survival mode, but with their basic weapon.
TO QUALIFY 35 wins
EVIDENCE Pic of the final summary screen.
POINTS 30

1	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** C'mon, enter this challenge!
2	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** It's a really ace game...
3	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** Enter! Enter! Enter!
4	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** Please?
5	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** Eeeeeeennnnnnterrrrrrr!

TIMED TO DIE

WE WANT Your fastest Standard Time Attack.
THE LAW Use any character, but with their basic weapon (ie, no Soul Edges and the like).
TO QUALIFY 3'30"
EVIDENCE Pic of the final summary screen.
POINTS 30

1	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** To date, no entries
2	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** You're letting us down, dude
3	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** You'd probably be really good at this
4	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** Go on, take on the challenge!
5	0:00m	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** Go! Purchase *Soul Calibur*! Enter!

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO... I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW



When sending us evidence of your achievements, it's useful to follow these here steps…

PHOTOGRAPHS

If you're sending us evidence of the photographic variety:

1. Turn off the camera's flash (or cover it up) to prevent it from reflecting off the screen.
2. Draw the curtains to eradicate sunlight.
3. Use a fast film (200 or 400 ASA).
4. If you're using a digicam then use a slower shutter speed.
5. Point at the screen and click away.

PLEASE NOTE: In the past we've had experience of certain scamps 'fiddling' with their photographic evidence, so this time round we're being extra-specially (is that right?) careful. We would, in fact, welcome video evidence over photographic evidence. If, however, you can only send photos, be warned: any doubts over the legality of your entry will lead to instant disqualification, and malicious jeering.

VIDEO

If you're going to be sending us the evidence that comes on a tape, follow the instructions below carefully:

1. Plug the TV lead from the Gamecube into the Signal In socket of your video.
2. Connect the Signal Out socket on your video to your TV.
3. Find a spare channel on the video and search for the signal.
4. After completing and recording the challenge, rewind the tape and send it in. We can't return tapes, sorry.



THE LEADERBOARD

MONTH 1: THE FIRST SCORES ARE IN…

1 **Bruce Livings** Watford	**606.01pts**
2 **Steve Brooks** Broughton A.	**441.01pts**
3 **Matthew Pellett** Spalding	**430pts**
4 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	**371.01pts**
5 **Rex McGee** Trowbridge	**300pts**
6 **Dermot Ryan** Mullingar	**270pts**
7 **Dean Hailstone** Jarrow	**266.01pts**
8 **Mr S** Aberdare	**260pts**
9 **Michael Rothwell** Wallasey	**250pts**
10 **Bryan Docherty** Govrock	**245pts**
11 **Barry Lewis** Dairsie, **Michael Seaward** Stanley	**225pts**
12 **Andrew McGrae** Southport	**205pts**
13 **H. Rooney-Nugent** London, **D. McDonald** Warwick	**195pts**
14 **Paul Gibb** Cheltenham, **Janne Kaitila** Finland	**185pts**
15 **Rob Jones** Poole,	**180pts**
16 **Jason Leverett** Great Yarmouth	**175pts**
17 **Simon Mason** West Parley	**165pts**
18 **Norman Glover** Cleveland	**160pts**
19 **Lee Graham** Bristol, **Banjo-Fluff** The Breegul Aviary, **Adam Weston** Ballycranbeg	**150pts**
20 **Grant David Taylor** Edinburgh	**135pts**
21 **Thomas Cox** Birchington	**130pts**
22 **Matthew Woof** Leamington Spa	**125pts**
23 **Paul Edmonds** Stamford	**115pts**
24 **Michael/Alex Rose** Davyhulme	**100pts**
25 **B. Case** Camberley, **L. Voigtländer-Ford** Milton Keynes	**95pts**
26 **Daniel Sneddon** Bingley, **Jamie McGooking** Ayrshire	**90pts**
27 **Nick Ashplant** Ashburton, **Jake Napper** Great Missinden	**80pts**
28 **Philip Regan** Liverpool	**75pts**
29 **David Drabble** Matlock, **Tim Osborne** Newcastle, **Matt Dyson** Southampton	**70pts**
30 **Matthew Bickham** Northwood Hills	**50pts**

Each month, the totals will be totted up and balances displayed in the Big Table™. The top five spots at the end of the season win goodies – Numero Uno gets not only planet-wide admiration/envy in equal measure, but hard material goods. We keep track of every entrant's scores, so you can boost your points each month and move onto or up the list.







ENTRY FORM

FILL IN THE NUMBERS!

Name..

Address..

....Postcode........................

Send to…..I'M THE BEST,
NGC Magazine
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Defaced or illegible papers will be disqualified and burned in the furnaces of Hell, *pour encourager les autres*.

TIMESPLITTERS 2
- ❑ CUT EM OUT! ....
- ❑ MONKEY MARKSMAN ....

PIKMIN
- ❑ GREEN FINGERS #1 ....
- ❑ GREEN FINGERS #2 ....

BURNOUT 2
- ❑ CHAIN DRIVER ....
- ❑ DOLLAR KILLS ....

METROID PRIME
- ❑ THE FULL METROID ....
- ❑ STATION ESCAPE ....

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
- ❑ WARPED FACTOR FUN ....
- ❑ COINING IT IN ....

SSX TRICKY
- ❑ SNOWOFF ....

FIFA 2003
- ❑ MADRID MASTER ....

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
- ❑ FUNGI TO BE WITH ....
- ❑ HERE COMES TROUBLE ....

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2
- ❑ GIBBON GLIDER ....
- ❑ SUB MISSION ....

IKARUGA
- ❑ ROBOT CHALLENGE #1 ....
- ❑ ROBOT CHALLENGE #2 ....

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION
- ❑ GREEN HILL SKILLZ ....

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
- ❑ FREE FLIGHT ....

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO
- ❑ SON OF A LEECH ....

HITMAN 2
- ❑ SPEED KILLER ....

NEW CHALLENGE!

SOUL CALIBUR II
- ❑ SOUL SURVIVOR ....
- ❑ TIMED TO DIE ....

HEY! IT'S THE RETURN OF...

GAME ON!



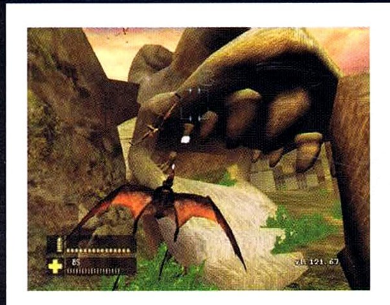


When your games grow tired and old, don't just leave them in a corner. Show them you still love them by firing up the 'Cube and having a crack at these challenges – or even better, thinking up your own and sending them in to us.

Game On is all about discovering new ways to play old favourites. You might find something in here that'll give you a reason to dust down a title you haven't touched in weeks. Each challenge has targets for gold, silver or bronze medals, as set by its author. Have a crack at any you find interesting, and if you're inspired to create a few of your own then send them to **Game On**, at the usual address, and we'll help you share them with the Nintendo-loving world.



TUROK EVOLUTION







RAPTOR RAPTURE

by **George Michael Maris, Seaford**

Dinosaurs, eh? Not quite as extinct as they're supposed to be. But you can help wipe them off the face of the planet if you head on over to the Selkirk Complex multiplayer level. Get down to ground level, break out the crossbow and let the killing commence. George recommends trying it on 'Blood Bath'. And if that still isn't hard enough, get a friend to help the raptors by sniping at you with a pistol. **Count the number of raptors you manage to exterminate** before they fillet your body and wear your skin like some sort of hilarious human disguise.

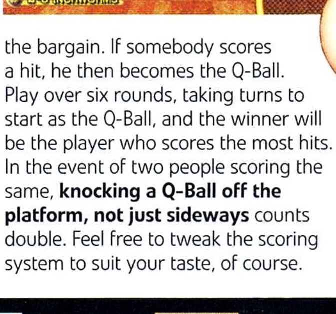


RAPTORS  8  5  3

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2







Q-BALL

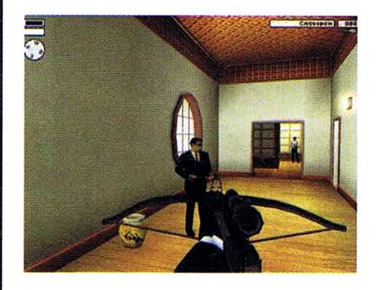
by **Oliver Upton, Handsacre**

Here's a great new way to spice up Monkey Target 2. After the first player has landed on the target as normal, he becomes the 'Q-Ball' and the other players must try to hit him – preferably knocking him clean off the platform into the bargain. If somebody scores a hit, he then becomes the Q-Ball. Play over six rounds, taking turns to start as the Q-Ball, and the winner will be the player who scores the most hits. In the event of two people scoring the same, **knocking a Q-Ball off the platform, not just sideways** counts double. Feel free to tweak the scoring system to suit your taste, of course.



FINISH  1ST  2ND  3RD

HITMAN 2




BALLERS BLOW-OUT

by **Toby Sperring, no fixed abode**



Hate stealth? Love killing? Here's a challenge which involves nothing but gratuitous violence. Best of all, it's actually quite funny, in a corpse-violating sort of way. Go to any level you like – Toby suggests the basement of Tubeway Torpedo, but any place will do. Whip out your Ballers, attract some attention, and **see how far you can blast somebody with a single shot**. We'll give you a tip: head shots seem to get the best distance. You can also adapt this challenge to see how far you can volley a man before his corpse touches down, or experiment with other weapons. Measure the distance using 47's walking paces. Hours of fun!

PACES  20  25  10

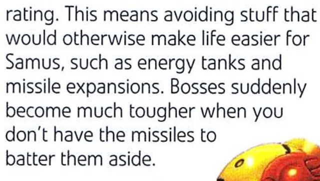
METROID PRIME




STINGY SAMUS

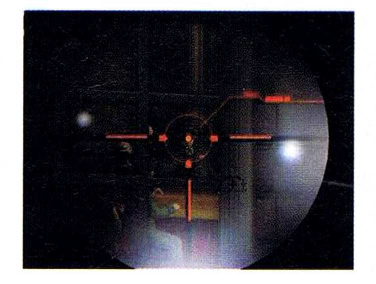
by **Henry 'Metroid Madskillz' Petrie, Nottingham**

Good at *Metroid*, are you? Very good at *Metroid*? Inordinately, ridiculously masterful at *Metroid*? This is the challenge for you. If you're fed up with completing the game the normal way, aiming to get as high a percentage as possible, try going against your instincts. Finish the game with the lowest possible percentage rating. This means avoiding stuff that would otherwise make life easier for Samus, such as energy tanks and missile expansions. Bosses suddenly become much tougher when you don't have the missiles to batter them aside.




%  40 50 60

HITMAN 2

DON ROAMIN'

by **Fred Smith, Helmshore**

Mafia justice is second to none. There's no time wasted in courtrooms, and no public money spent lining the pockets of parasitic lawyers. But it isn't without its own set of hazards – getting caught by forensic evidence, for example. Which is why you really shouldn't handle bodies unless you absolutely have to. Common sense, really. To put this into practice, go to the Anathema level, execute the Don, and **see how many bullets it takes** to shoot his cadaver all the way to the front gates. You might have to kill everyone else in the level, too. Oh well.

BULLETS  UNDER 40  41–75  76–80

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE




SPLASHDOWN

by **Tom Morrison, Thornton**

Mario is almost indestructible when diving. Which is just as well, because in this challenge he hits the water so hard, the impact must be just like hitting concrete. If he weren't so tough, there'd be nothing left of him but a reddish stain in the water with a hat floating on top. You know, like in Jaws. Anyway, go to Bianco Hills and select the second Shine. Get a rocket nozzle and go to the windmill sails. Charge the nozzle, hop high, and blast Mario into the sky. At the apex of the flight, press forward and B to dive, and see **how much air-time** you achieve.

SECONDS  7  6  5

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO



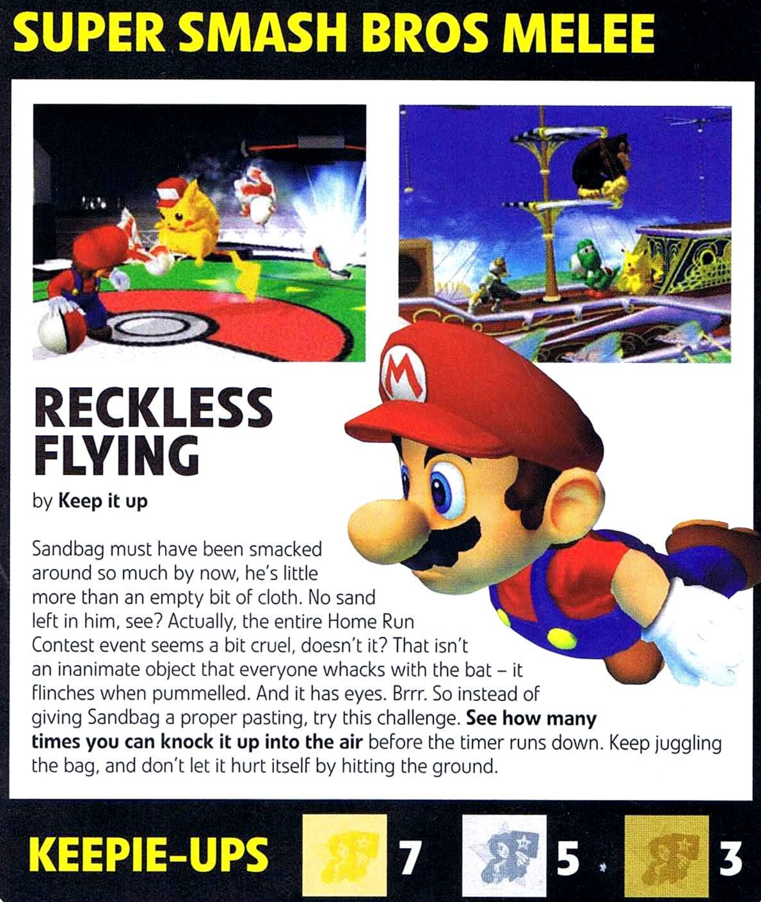
HIDE AND SNACK

by **Adam Chrimes, Nottingham**

When zombies no longer hold the trouser-browning power of fear, what's left to do in *Resident Evil Zero*? Play hide-and-seek, of course. You'll need to clear out the Umbrella training facility first, sending all the zombies to their meaty doom. Then split up the two characters, and send the player who's going to do the seeking out of the room. Allow a minute or so to hide Rebecca in the trickiest place you can find – rooms with tight camera angles are the best. After that, let your mate back in and time how long it takes for Billy to **locate his foxy playmate** in the training facility.

TIME 3 MINS 6 MINS 10 MINS

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE



RECKLESS FLYING

by **Keep it up**

Sandbag must have been smacked around so much by now, he's little more than an empty bit of cloth. No sand left in him, see? Actually, the entire Home Run Contest event seems a bit cruel, doesn't it? That isn't an inanimate object that everyone whacks with the bat – it flinches when pummelled. And it has eyes. Brrr. So instead of giving Sandbag a proper pasting, try this challenge. **See how many times you can knock it up into the air** before the timer runs down. Keep juggling the bag, and don't let it hurt itself by hitting the ground.

KEEPIE-UPS 7 5 3

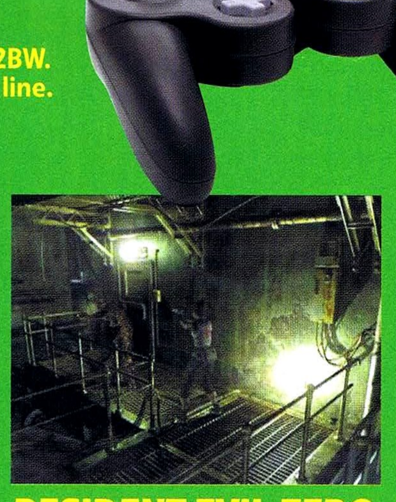


NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...

Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to...

GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.
Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol' 'Cube, but this month we're particularly interested in...



METROID PRIME



ETERNAL DARKNESS



BALDUR'S GATE

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?



PHANTASY FORUM

'Blorktastica Statalista' as they don't say anywhere, apart from in Geraint's *head*…

More of a functional Phantasy Forum for you this month. Given that any particular character you choose will require hundreds of hours' investment, it's imperative that you don't hit those high levels only to discover you can't fashion your character exactly the way you want them – picking the right one to start with and using any Materials you find in the most effective manner is absolutely essential.

So, just for you, we've created a handy list of Maximum Statistics for you to use as a reference when you're online, or when you're looking to start a new character.

NEW TO PSO?

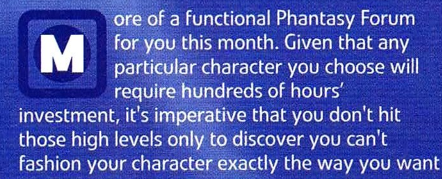


Come now, don't be afraid. Let us ease you in gently.

1 To play *Phantasy Star Online* you'll need a copy of the game, a Modem or Broadband adaptor (if you can't find one in the shops, try online at stores such as Amazon) and an ISP like Freeserve Anytime that allows you to connect to the internet.

2 Once you've got all of the above, sit in front of your TV and make sure you have the following: your ISP's user ID and password, your *PSO* passwords (on the back of the instruction manual) and an *official* memory card.

3 Enter all of the details *exactly* as they should be in your 'provider options' found on the options screen of the game. Once you've done this you need to get a hunter's licence. You can acquire one from www.playsega.com. It costs £5.99 a month. Then… you're ready for action.



MAXIMUM STATISTICS – HUNTERS

HUmar

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1420	-
TP	793	-
ATP	943	1397
DFP	422	579
MST	594	732
ATA	174	200
EVP	682	756
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL

Attack: 15, Deband: 15, Resta: 15, Anti: 5, Shifta: 15

HUnewearl

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1308	-
TP	1084	-
ATP	835	1237
DFP	538	589
MST	885	1177
ATA	147	199
EVP	666	811
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL

Attack: 20, Jellen: 20, Anti: 7, Resta: 20, Shifta: 20, Zalure: 20, Deband: 20

HUcast

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1762	-
TP	0	0
ATP	1146	1639
DFP	501	601
MST	0	0
ATA	158	191
EVP	585	660
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL

N/A



HUcaseal

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1380	-
TP	0	0
ATP	901	1301
DFP	399	525
MST	0	0
ATA	184	218
EVP	777	877
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL

N/A



MAXIMUM STATISTICS - RANGERS

RAmar

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1520	-
TP	704	-
ATP	806	1260
DFP	359	515
MST	505	665
ATA	230	249
EVP	639	715
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL
Attack: 15
Resta: 15
Shifta: 15
Deband: 15
Anti: 5

RAmarl

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1315	-
TP	931	-
ATP	743	1145
DFP	426	577
MST	732	1031
ATA	216	241
EVP	798	900
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL
Attack: 20
Resta: 20
Zalure: 20
Jellen: 20
Shifta: 20
Deband: 20
Anti: 7

RAcast

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1964	-
TP	0	0
ATP	859	1350
DFP	505	606
MST	0	0
ATA	199	224
EVP	626	699
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL
N/A



RAcaseal

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1890	-
TP	0	0
ATP	775	1175
DFP	562	688
MST	0	0
ATA	208	231
EVP	713	787
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL
N/A



MAXIMUM STATISTICS - FORCES

FOmar

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1175	-
TP	1783	-
ATP	753	1002
DFP	321	470
MST	990	1340
ATA	138	163
EVP	551	651
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL
Attack: 30
Support: 30
Anti: 7

HIGH LEVEL TECH BOOST
Gi… spells and Grants x 1.3 Damage.
Shifta and Deband x 2 effective range.

FOmarl

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1273	-
TP	1699	-
ATP	721	872
DFP	351	498
MST	934	1284
ATA	144	170
EVP	513	588
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL
Attack: 30
Support: 30
Anti: 7

HIGH LEVEL TECH BOOST
Grants x 1.5 Damage.
Resta, Deband and Anti x 2 effective range.

FOnewm

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1232	-
TP	1945	-
ATP	613	814
DFP	408	463
MST	1098	1500
ATA	128	180
EVP	531	679
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL
Attack: 30
Support: 30
Anti: 7

HIGH LEVEL TECH BOOST
Gi… spells x1.3 Damage.
Ra… spells x 1.3 Damage.
TP regenerates at high levels

FOnewearl

STAT	BASE	MAX
HP	1148	-
TP	2098	-
ATP	483	583
DFP	334	390
MST	1200	1750
ATA	133	186
EVP	735	883
LCK	10	100

MAXIMUM TECHNIQUE LEVEL
Attack: 30
Support: 30
Anti: 7

HIGH LEVEL TECH BOOST
Foie, Zonde, Barta and Megid x 1.3 Damage
Resta and Anti x 2 effective range
TP regenerates at high levels

MATERIAL USE

Material use can make or break a decent character. Nearly all your stats can be increased by using either a Mag or by using Materials. However, the effects of Materials can not be undone – and there's a limited amount of times you can use them too. Be aware of the limits of your chosen character. It's no good spending 50 of your RAmar's 250 Mats on Mind, for example, only to discover that their Technique potential is limited and you'd have been better off boosting Power instead. Likewise, it's pointless using 50 Power Mats on a FOnewearl if you never indulge in any melee combat.

Look at the maximum statistics for your chosen character and consider which Materials would be better spent in which area. Remember that you can always balance out or boost specific stats with a carefully-evolved Mag. It's also well worth the effort just jotting own how many, and what kinds of, Materials you've used so far, as keeping track of them is virtually impossible if you've forgotten…

HUMAN CHARACTERS (??mar, ??marl)
250 Pow/Def/Evade/Mind/Luck Material
125 HP/TP Material

NEWMAN CHARACTERS (??newm, ??newearl)
150 Pow/Def/Evade/Mind/Luck Material
125 HP/TP Material

ANDROIDS (??cast, ??caseal)
150 Pow/Def/Evade/Mind/Luck Material
125 HP/TP Material

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'...

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

... right now! And please include your *name and address*. Oh, go on. Please.

STAR LETTER

The winner of the Star Letter receives a bundle of gaming gear courtesy of Joytech, incorporating two Advanced Controllers, a gold-plated RGB Scart cable, an 8Mb memory card and a GC/GBA link cable. Mint!

'Get a job'

So Mr 'Hardcore Nintendo Fan' (*Mailbox*, **NGC**/*83*) completed *Zelda* in one week, eh? The guy must have been playing non-stop – you can't tell me that this 'one week' was just an hour here and there. I wouldn't call myself a 'hardcore' fan or even a particularly good gamer, but I have been playing *Zelda* the occasional evening and weekend (as, I imagine, most other 'normal' Nintendo gamers do) for quite a while now, and haven't been stuck at any point. And yet there has been more than enough to do, not least the time-consuming sailing sections!

Now correct me if I'm wrong, but not everyone has the spare time to spend an entire week playing a videogame. In fact, I would hazard a guess that for the majority gaming is a hobby rather than a career. I'm not too sure that Nintendo had people such as Mr Hardcore in mind when designing the game. Imagine if they did, and it took him a couple of months' solid play or whatever to complete – the average gamer such as myself would have to spend years playing to complete the bloody thing.

Stop bragging, and GET A JOB.
Kevin Wallis, Rainham

***Back in the knife drawer with you! We had loads of letters in response to Hardcore's missive, and only a handful supported his stance. Most, like yourself, have been more than satisfied with* Wind Waker*'s longevity. I found it a hugely enjoyable game that I'll never forget. That's what's important.* Ed**





'The lawyers'

While looking through a holiday brochure, I came across this ad for Hotel Delfino. If my memory serves me correctly, isn't this the name of the hotel on Serena Beach in *Super Mario Sunshine*? Maybe it's time for Nintendo to break out the lawyers...
Shane Rynhart, Bournemouth

***And the brochure neglected to mention the electric manta rays that spread fluorescent gunk all over the beach at twilight.* Ed**

'A slave'

Is it just me, or do the Game Boy Advance and the SP (especially) seem to be entirely back-up plans for Nintendo? I mean, Nintendo is only bringing old games out on the GBA, and although they might be good games, there is no originality or effort going into them – only a change of format.

However, Gamecube seems to be very well served with first-party games such as *Zelda* and *Metroid*, as well as the third-party games. Game Boy is being left behind. It seems like a failsafe – GBA is there in the unlikely case of a loss in profit for the GC.

I know the GBA-GC link is being introduced, but this only improves extras and doesn't affect the quality of the GBA games. Doesn't it seem like it's a slave to the Gamecube? And the introduction of the Game Boy Player for the GC just about proves to me that GC is doing better than the Game Boy.
Rick Anstey, Milton Keynes

***To be fair, there's some great stuff for the Game Boy, like* Metroid Fusion *and* Golden Sun*, out there. And no Gamecube game has sold as well as either* Pokémon Ruby *or* Sapphire *for the GBA. We'd agree that too high a proportion of GBA titles are SNES conversions, but just savour the quality of* Advance Wars 2*. It's so big, I can't see myself having time to play many other GBA games until Christmas at the earliest.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

That's when he collapsed in a pile of his own vomit.
***Typical Geary. Sob.* Ed**

Half of us wants to rejoice and run around screaming... But the other half is quite resentful.
Tim Stephens & Matt Pill, Birmingham
***Bipolar.* Ed**

As Dickens wrote in Geat Expectations, no amount of varnish can hide the grain of the wood.
Adam Mander, Bradford on Avon
***Gloss paint can.* Ed**

This sentence is to fill up room on the page, so I am not wasting paper.
Sean Hinton, Kidderminster.
***Trees died for this.* Ed**

Perhaps this is the start of another bigger war, the war between mobiles and consoles. It could be called the Mobile-Console War.
Tim Lewis, Spalding
***Catchy. I like it.* Ed**

'I have racks'

Your *Hitman 2* review was rubbish and misleading. It has an absolutely disgraceful control system from the year 412 BC: turn and move; line up the camera to eye level; turn and move; get shot; move camera from pointing at sky; get shot again...

Anyone who knows games, has experience and purports to be a reviewer, should immediately see that *Hitman 2* is fundamentally flawed. We can all see what it is trying to achieve but it fails miserably at the very first step. Add things like the map being niggly to bring up and you have a nightmare on your hands.

I have racks of classic games and I know exactly what I'm talking about.
'Old Marty', address (and name) not supplied

***Sounds like the real reason you're upset is because you're crap at the game. If you keep ending up with the camera flailing wildly all over the place, it's due to your lack of thumb-control, not any inherent flaw in* Hitman 2*. We had no problems with it.* Ed**

'To unlock'

Re-reading issue 67, I was surprised to find that Neil Randall, the reviewer of *Sonic Adventure 2: Battle* had clearly stated that *Sonic Adventure* should have been ported to the Gamecube instead of *Sonic Adventure 2*. *Sonic Adventure* is now on the Gamecube, so why did it get such a low score? In my opinion, *Sonic Adventure DX* is superior to *Sonic Adventure 2: Battle*.

Sonic Team made several improvements to *Sonic Adventure DX*. Sonic Team hardly did any improvements for *Sonic Adventure 2: Battle*. Sonic Team have added a map for each Adventure Field to *DX*, there is a Mission mode to complete, there are 12 Game Gear games to



HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Thanks to everyone who wrote in this month, including (but not limited to): Sean Deverell, Portarlington; Paolo Del Viscio, Edinburgh; Harry Burnett, Cherry Willingham; Darragh McMahon, Waterford; Richard Clements, Dearham; Alison Coleman, Lincoln; Stuart Flint, Margate; Zach Brooks, Bournemouth; Sophie Coates, Chester; Mark Thorpe, Bridlington; Jason Yardley, Sutton Coldfield; Lee Machin, via email; Mark Stevens, Wexford; Emile Sirrs, Newark; Patrick Scully, Co. Galway; Michael Fenton, West Lothian; miko Rumsby, Alton; Martin Brandt, via email; Felix Kenton, Chorleywood; Alex Calverley, Bury; Ed Andersen, via email;

unlock, and they have improved the graphics for the game.
David Lucey, Ireland

***Reviewer Jim McCauley did give it a bit of a mauling, didn't he? But the game has a jittery frame rate and abundant pop-up, and in that respect it's inferior to the Dreamcast original. We felt that a few lighting effects and some Game Gear extras didn't make it live up to its Director's Cut billing.* Ed**

'Rather gaunt'



Here's a picture of a rather gaunt-looking Mazza out on the job in Lake Bled, near Ljubljana in Slovenia. Must be saving up for another holiday, after spending half of the last one thwarting evil.

Oh, by the way, time is not a force, but is, in fact, an artificial constant used to compare rates of change (rates of change being the resulting effects of forces acting on objects). Therefore, because time can be used as a measure, it can be classed as a dimension (having comparable divisions and units within its continuum).

Hence all games follow '4D'. The fact that Link doesn't grow a beard is irrelevant. Virtual reality doesn't change because there are no external forces acting on it, but it still progresses through time from point A to point B.

And if you want to be nit-picky about physics, games aren't actually 3D. it's an illusion presented on a 2D screen, hence 'perceptual 3D' or 'virtual reality'. Now off to school with you little scamps.
Russell Norton, Somerset

***And after that first paragraph, the last thing I expected was a resurrection of the old 4D debate. Well put, though. Hopefully this puts the lid on all that time-travel guff.* Ed**

'Charts right now'

You must have heard about Nintendo and their music tour across Japan, featuring a number of well-known themes from some of their biggest titles, right?

As much as I'd love to experience it, I suggest they scrap it for now and instead get Totakeke, the singing dog from *Animal Crossing*, on a round-the-world tour, performing at train stations every Saturday night. His music is brilliant. It needs to be heard, especially when you look at what's in the charts right now!

Or, Nintendo should at least release a soundtrack to Totakeke, like they've done with the likes of *Ocarina of Time* and *Wind Waker* in the past. If only this game was coming to Europe… That'd surely be a great way to get people interested in this game – they would just need to hear his tunes.
Olly Parry-Jones, via email

***A superb marketing idea, I'd say. For those who haven't played the game, Totakeke shows up to sing a song outside the train station at 7pm every Saturday. Of course, if he did that round here in Bath, he'd have an audience of around 40 Frosty Jack-fuelled tramps wailing along.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

It's like I was heading back in time rather than forwards. But now I've realised my mistake.
Angelos Perlegas, Greece
***Don't you start.* Ed**

Did you know that your magazine is even for sale in a farmer's hole somewhere in Holland?
Jaap Temming, Holland
***But who'd want to read it after it had been in there?* Ed**

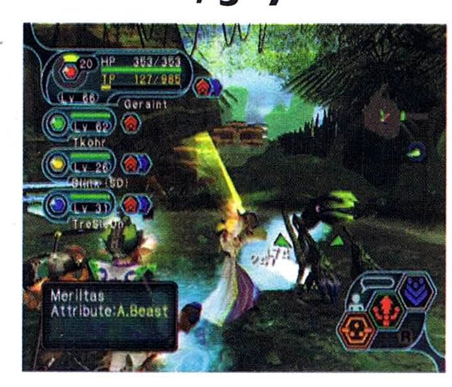
As you walk, you create a kinetic forward force, which overcomes the force pushing against you, and that is friction.
Mark Nisbet, Galston
***Zzzzzzz.* Ed**

Miyamoto's testicles must be so big that he needs a wheelbarrow to carry them around with him.
Alex Sobell, Rickmansworth
***Absolutely true.* Ed**

Perhaps this has something to do with Mario's love for pickle brine?
Lewis Horwood, via email
***Could be.* Ed**

Damn Sony. And damn Microsoft too. They ruined everything. Well, not everything. But lots of things.
Matthew Verso, Co. Dublin
***You tell 'em.* Ed**

'Come on, guys'



I'm not sure why Nintendo is scared to go online. Xbox Live is amazing fun, but Nintendo has the software to pummel it into the floor.

Just imagine the online possibilities: *Rogue Squadron, Mario Kart/ Tennis/ Golf/ Party, Animal Crossing, F-Zero*… All of these would be sound. Have Nintendo not played *Phantasy Star Online*? Or are they just jealous that their. less fortunate rival Sega is making better use of Gamecube's capabilities?

GBA-GC connectivity is nice, but online gaming is so much nicer. I should think that if online gaming was not sustainable then Microsoft would have pulled out by now. Come on, guys, take a damn risk.
Matt Hemmington, Rugby

Microsoft is one of the richest corporations in the world, and will keep throwing money at Xbox in the hope that some of it will stick. But certain companies, notably EA, prefer to set up their own online networks rather than go through Microsoft's centralised, subscription-based system, which is why they refuse to support Xbox Live. And remember, EA's decision not to support Dreamcast was cited as the biggest reason for the console's demise, so it's a huge and embarrassing blow for Microsoft.

***If they wanted to, any company could take Gamecube online right now, like Sega did with PSO. There's no need to wait for Nintendo to set up a GC Live sort of thing, and it might alienate some of the console's biggest third-party allies if they did. But* Mario Tennis *online…* F-Zero*… Yes please, Nintendo.* Ed**

'Smacking Peach'

Following all the hype about *Mario Kart Double Dash!!*, I decided to play on the N64 version. It was then that I realised what cheating little gits the computer-controlled players are. You can have a perfect lap, smacking Peach in the face with a couple of shells and fakies, then about eight seconds later she overtakes, beating you by 0.05 seconds on the finish line. I hope they sort this out in the new one.
Pete Grubb, Crediton

***It's more fun if you have to keep racing all the way to the line, rather than keep winning by three-quarters of a lap. Isn't it?* Ed**

'Refused to buy'

Why should I buy *Zelda Wind Waker* for £40? If I wanted to watch a cartoon I'd buy a Disney video for £12. I refused to buy *Wind Waker* because it looks like a badly-drawn cartoon. Nintendo needs



CORRECTION CORNER

I was wondering while reading your 'Was the N64 better than Gamecube?' feature in issue 83, what is a 'Tamecube'? Have I missed the release of Ninty's new console – Tamecube? Or was it supposed to be Gamecube. Yes, that would make sense.
Elliot House, Kent

***Erm… It's a special edition Gamecube that won't play* Resi *or* Hitman 2. Ed**

In issue 83, for the *Gladius* preview's The Knowledge, you stated that it was 'Blazing a trail as the Gamecube's first ever turn-based-action-role-playing-game'. Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't Sega's *Skies of Arcadia Legends* an RPG with turn-based action?
Matt Brown, Oxfordshire

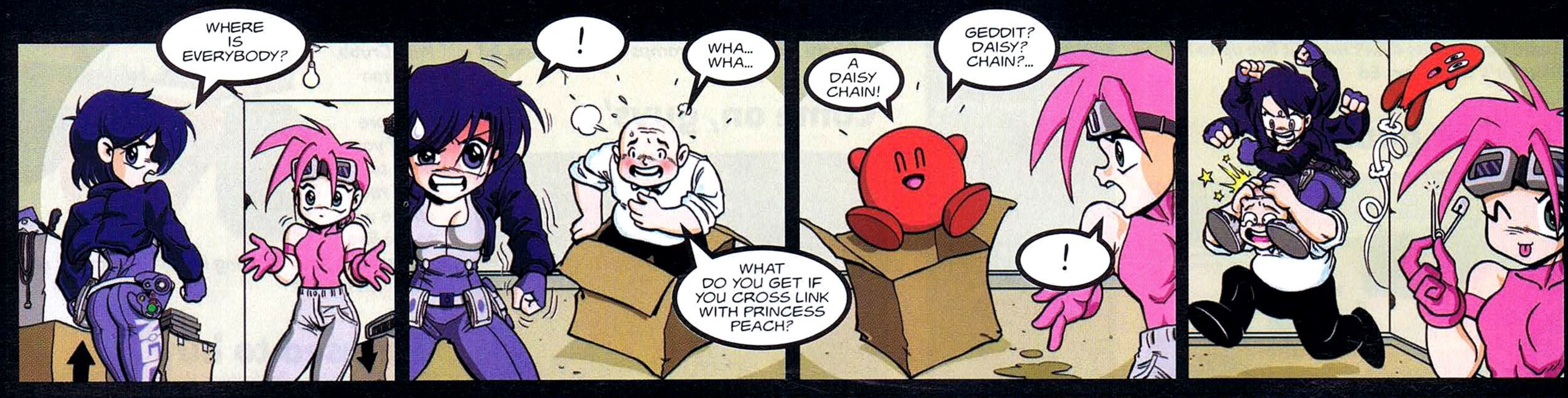
***A simple misprint. It was meant to say 'second ever'. No really, it was. Ahem.* Ed**

Kester Cranfield, Burscough; Wim Brands, Belgium; Paul Lupton, Nottingham; Susannah Gill, Hartlepool; John Coxon, Peterborough; Chris Conn, Milltimber; Matt Wendelz. via email; David Newman, Cambridge; Darren Revell, Plymouth; Zach Morris, Hailsham; Ross Rankin, St Neots; Mal Stuthridge, Wirral; Clem Stockwell, Swansea; Ben O'Reilly, Manchester; Ben Mills, via email; Matt Coxhill, Buckingham; Janne Kaitila, Finland; Jason Sharpe, Milton Keynes; James Millar, Aberdeen; Leigh Jones, Wolverhampton; Emma Simpson, Nottingham; Simon Lovell, Reading; Kate Buffery, Beverley; Alison Alldred, via email; and too many others to mention. Don't forget to tell us your address, you 'via email' people. Chars!

"The struggle of female elephants to lay horse-sized eggs"

Grintendo!

SEND US YOUR JOKES, AND WE'LL TEST THEM ON THE LOVELY ENJIKI. IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT YOU MAKE HER SMILE, WE'LL SEND YOU A FREE GAME. OKAY?
THIS MONTH: 'JOKE' SUPPLIED BY PHILIP ANDREWS



WRITE TO... GRINTENDO/MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW/OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

to realise that mature gamers don't want games that look childish, and neither do the young ones.
Blake Carington, London

***And there was me thinking the world had got over this nonsense months ago. Anyway, in case you hadn't heard, you missed out on the best game of the year. Mature? Foolish.* Ed**



'Perfect length'

Nintendo's games are criticised for being short, but in the days of the N64 they were criticised for long development times. You cannot have short development time and a lengthy game.

In *Wind Waker*'s case, the game is not as long as *Ocarina*, but it is hardly as short as most titles available. It had half the development time of *Ocarina*; it was never going to be as long. Miyamoto himself has already stated that this console generation is more of an evolution than a revolution, and I feel this is reflected in the latest iterations of *Mario* and *Zelda*.

Sunshine and *Wind Waker* don't have the revolutionary feel their predecessors did, but the quality is still there. Both games are the perfect length. If you want to rush through them you can collect the minimal amount of Shines and not partake in *Wind Waker*'s side quests. If you want to get more involved in the title you can seek out all the blue coins and partake in side quests. It allows those with little time to play a



masterpiece through and those with more to get a lengthier game. The experience is still the very same that keeps Nintendo head and shoulders above the rest.
Jamie Scagell, Aylesbury

***And with that, a case is rested.* Ed**

'All things fun'

I've completed most of my games and have unlocked many secrets but I still think many Gamecube titles are lacking in 'end of game' fun.

I believe that once the main boss in a game is killed it shouldn't mean the end of all things fun. Games like *Mario Sunshine* and *Wind Waker* have got it sussed, but why can't other games follow in their footsteps? Even being allowed to roam places where you couldn't before would be enough. However, I will let Nintendo be if they were just to include a bonus disc like they did with *Wind Waker*...

Roddy Dunning, Maidenhead

Indeed. That accompanying* Ocarina of Time *disc is probably the greatest freebie in the history of all things ever. You might also want to check out* Hitman 2 *if you're after some truly open-ended gaming.

SO TELL ME THIS...

Can games really be 4D, oh Mighty Brain? Bring us the Power of Learn!

1. Where is that interview with Shigsy you promised recently?
2. Could we please have the full story with *Animal Crossing*? You seem to be hinting that it won't be released in the UK, but surely not!?
3. Any more news on a Gamecube Donkey Kong game?
4. Any details on the game formerly known as *Mario 128*?
5. Will there be a *Wario Land 5* game for GBA?
6. What do you prefer in sandwiches – cheese or ham? I am a cheese man myself.
Todd Marsh, Cheltenham

1. It vanished when Jes left.
2. It's highly unlikely, but there's a chance we may get a sequel in the future.
3. See page 38 for that 'un.
4. Only that it features something so 'unusual' that it has to be kept under wraps until very close to its release, for fear that competitors will steal its big idea.
5. Almost certainly, yes.
6. Cheese, all the way.

When my daughter was younger she had a SNES and a game called *Dr Mario's Pill Game*, where you had to line up pills of the same colour. She now has a Gamecube and GBA, and I was wondering if we could still buy this game for one of the machines we have. We have games that are similar, but they're not the same as *Dr Mario's Pill Game*.
Miss D Linney, Coventry

That's just plain* Dr Mario, *and it will be on the* Nintendo Puzzle Collection *for GC, released early next year. Also, the near-identical* Dr Wario *is a bonus game on the fantastic* Wario Ware *for GBA.

Pokémon is the only Nintendo franchise I haven't tried since the NES, but I'm going to give *Ruby* a go. I will only be able to play on my own, as none of my mates have GBAs, so would you lower the score for people who won't be able to sample the trading and other multiplayer things?
Kevin King, Redcar

It's a fun game no matter how you play it, but the multiplayer stuff does give* Pokémon Ruby *a whole new dimension. We wouldn't lower the score, mind.

Do you think there will ever be a game based upon the struggle of female elephants to lay horse-sized eggs? It could be a button basher like the *Track and Field* games.
Adam Hewitt, Rentokil

***Sounds like the perfect thing for a sequel to* Wario Ware.**

I have been trying, in vain, to get the *Splinter Cell* map up on my GBA SP. I just get a black GC symbol flashing in the top left of the screen. Some advice would be very welcome.
Richard Whitcombe, Wales

Make sure you don't have the GBA game in the cartridge slot. You must connect an empty GBA to the Gamecube for the map to be displayed.



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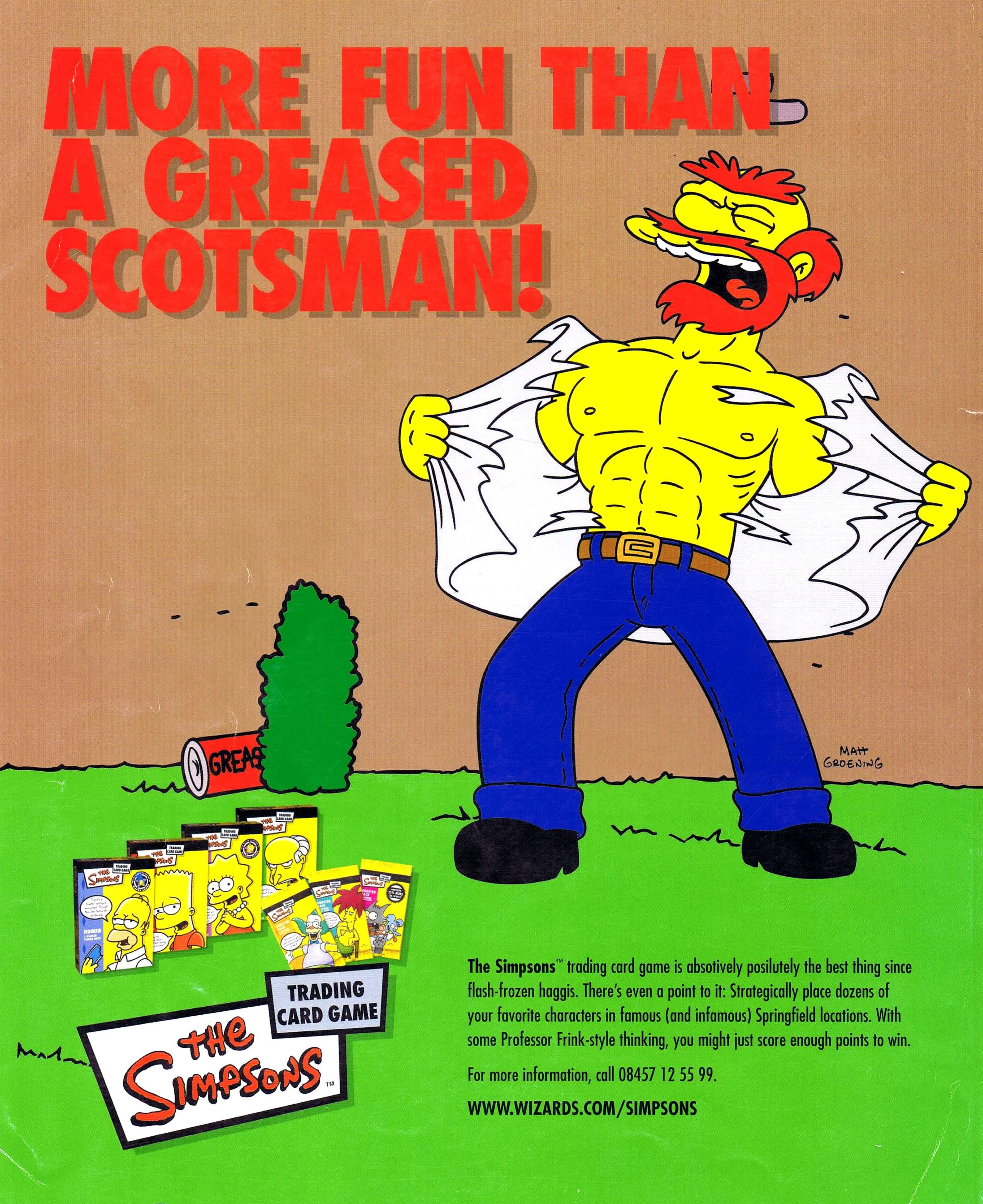
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